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A Case Study of Denmark

Olesen, Kristian

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STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING IN TRANSITION

- A CASE STUDY OF DENMARK

KRISTIAN OLESEN

**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
AALBORG UNIVERSITY**

Strategic Spatial Planning in Transition: a Case Study of Denmark

PhD thesis

Department of Development and Planning, Aalborg University

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TRANSLATION OF DANISH PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND ORGANISATIONS

- Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning [By- og landskabsstyrelsen]
- Danish Forestry and Nature Agency [Skov- og naturstyrelsen]
- Danish Nature Agency [Naturstyrelsen]
- Danish Town Planning Laboratory [Dansk Byplanlaboratorium]
- Danish Road Directorate [Vejdirektoratet]
- Danish Transport Authority [Trafikstyrelsen]
- Greater Copenhagen Authority [Hovedstadens Udviklingsråd, HUR]
- Greater Copenhagen Council [Hovedstadsrådet]
- Infrastructure Commission [Infrastrukturkommissionen]
- Kattegat Committee [Kattegatkomiteén]
- Local government regional council [kommunekontaktråd]
- Local Government Denmark [Kommunernes Landsforening, KL]
- Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs [Økonomi- og erhvervsministeriet]
- Ministry of the Environment [Miljøministeriet]
- Ministry of the Environment and Energy [Miljø- og energiministeriet]
- Ministry of Finance [Finansministeriet]
- Ministry of Interior and Health [Indenrigs- og sundhedsministeriet]
- Ministry of Transport [Transportministeriet]
- National environment centre [miljøcenter]
- National Spatial Planning Department [Landsplanafdelingen]
- Regional economic growth forum [vækstforum]
- Regional Planning Office [Egnsplankontoret]
- Regional Planning Secretariat [Egnsplansekretariat]
- Triangle Area [Trekantsområdet]

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Kristian Olesen, Aalborg, September 2011

SUMMARY

In the 2006 national planning report, the Danish Ministry of the Environment set out to transform strategic spatial planning in Denmark, as a response to the changing governance structures implemented in the structural reform in 2007. The national planning report presents a '*New Map of Denmark*' articulating two new urban regions as important scales for strategic spatial planning in Denmark. At the scale of these urban regions, the ministry initiated three new episodes of strategic spatial planning. In the Greater Copenhagen Area, the ministry prepared a national planning directive through a rather topdown planning process. In the Eastern Jutland Region and in Region Zealand, the ministry initiated new collaborative, multi-level strategic spatial planning processes involving the municipalities in the two urban regions in order to prepare spatial frameworks for the new planning spaces.

With a departure point in these three planning episodes, this PhD thesis analyses how strategic spatial planning in Denmark is being transformed in the period after the 2006 national planning report and the structural reform in 2007. The main research question of the PhD project is:

How can we understand the nature of the changes in Danish strategic spatial planning in practice, how do the changes in practice correspond with the theorisations of strategic spatial planning in the literature, and how does this help us to reflect on both?

The case study of strategic spatial planning in Denmark is informed by document analysis of national planning reports and spatial strategies, presentations, notes, analyses etc. prepared in the three planning episodes, together with interviews with national, regional and municipal planners involved in the preparation of the 2006 national planning report, the three planning episodes, or otherwise knowledgeable about strategic spatial planning in Denmark.

The research is based on a critical perspective on strategic spatial planning, which takes empirical research of how strategic spatial planning is carried out in planning practice as a point of departure for critical discussions on contemporary theorisations of strategic spatial planning. The thesis argues that such a research approach is helpful for stimulating critical reflection on current development trends within planning theory and planning practice. The thesis conceptualises contemporary transformations in strategic spatial planning in theory and practice as consisting of three themes concerned with: I) transforming the core idea of planning, II) re-imagining space,

and III) changing scales and forms of governance. The thesis analyses contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning in Denmark, pursuing sub-research questions related to each of these themes. Furthermore, the thesis explores how contemporary transformations in Danish strategic spatial planning are influenced and shaped by the particular socio-political context in which they are embedded.

The thesis outlines three main findings, relating to the three themes, which in different ways characterise the nature of the changes in strategic spatial planning in Denmark. First, the core idea of planning is being transformed in Denmark under neoliberal influence. Strategic spatial planning in Denmark has in recent years undergone a concerted reorientation as a consequence of an increasingly neoliberal political climate. Danish strategic spatial planning is currently shaped by ongoing struggles between contested planning rationalities and spatial logics, played out between a persistent regulatory, topdown planning rationality rooted in spatial Keynesianism and an emerging neoliberal growth-orientated planning approach, emphasising a new spatial logic of growth centres in major cities and urban regions. The particular Danish social-welfarist approach to strategic spatial planning has increasingly come under pressure as a result of transformations in politics. As a consequence, the momentum for reviving strategic spatial planning in Denmark seems currently to be lost. Instead, strategic spatial planning in Denmark seems to be on the threshold of a crisis.

Second, the changing governance structures provided a welcomed opportunity to re-imagine the map of Denmark. New relational conceptions of space and place are travelling into the practice of strategic spatial planning in Denmark. However, rather than replacing existing spatial conceptions and logics, new spatial imaginations are simply added to a discursive melting pot from which planning practitioners select appropriate spatial meanings. On one hand, the selection and sense of appropriateness of certain spatial conceptions and logics seem to rest in a particular Danish planning culture rather than in particular conceptions of spatiality. On the other hand, evidence from the case study of strategic spatial planning in Denmark suggests that relational spatial concepts and fuzzy spatial representations are used as means to depoliticise contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning in Denmark. Fuzzy spatial representations seem to provide temporary spaces for consensus, whilst blurring the spatial politics of spatial strategy-making.

Third, new scales and new forms of governance are emerging in Danish spatial planning, as a consequence of processes of state re-territorialisation and rescaling. As part of these processes, new soft spaces are emerging in Danish spatial planning

as new informal planning spaces at subnational scales and new informal multi-level, collaborative forms of strategic spatial planning. The soft spaces were imagined by the Ministry of the Environment as real-world scales for treating spatial issues, such as congestion and urban sprawl, by integrating urban development and transport planning at the scale of the two emerging urban regions. In the current neoliberal political climate in Denmark, the soft spaces were turned into cross-municipal platforms for transport infrastructure lobbying and promoting economic development. As a consequence, only limited policy integration resulted from the soft spaces, and instead, the soft spaces were used for putting increasing pressure on statutory planning, potentially acting as vehicles for neoliberal transformations of strategic spatial planning.

The thesis concludes that strategic spatial planning in Denmark is at a potential watershed between a revival and a crisis of strategic spatial planning. New strategic spatial planning ideas are increasingly being used as a smokescreen for neoliberal transformations of strategic spatial planning. Contemporary theorisations of strategic spatial planning are not adequate for understanding the dynamics inside contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning, and how these episodes are being shaped and influenced by their socio-political contexts. This thesis represents one of the first attempts to develop a critical perspective on strategic spatial planning and to use this to critique contemporary neoliberal transformation of strategic spatial planning in practice. The thesis calls for further research, theorisation and critique of how contemporary strategic spatial planning is being transformed under neoliberal influence.

DANSK RESUMÉ

Det danske Miljøministerium iscenesatte i landsplanredegørelsen fra 2006 en transformation af strategisk rumlig planlægning¹ i Danmark som svar på den ændrede styreformsstruktur, der fulgte af implementeringen af strukturreformen i 2007. Landsplanredegørelsen præsenterer et nyt danmarkskort, der fremhæver to nye byregioner som vigtige skalaer for strategisk rumlig planlægning i Danmark. På denne byregionsskala igangsatte ministeriet tre nye strategiske planepisoder. I Hovedstadsområdet udarbejdede ministeriet et landsplandirektiv gennem en overvejende topdown-styret planproces. I den østjyske byregion og i Region Sjælland igangsatte ministeriet nye samarbejdsorienterede strategiske planprocesser på tværs af flere niveauer og med inddragelse af kommunerne i de to byregioner med det formål at udvikle rammer for de nye planlægningsrum.

Med udgangspunkt i disse tre planepisoder, analyserer denne ph.d.-afhandling hvordan strategisk planlægning i Danmark er blevet transformeret i perioden efter landsplanredegørelsen og strukturreformen i 2007. Det primære forskningsspørgsmål i dette ph.d.-projekt er:

Hvordan kan vi forstå naturen af ændringerne i dansk strategisk planlægning i praksis, hvordan stemmer ændringerne i praksis overens med teoretiseringerne af strategisk rumlig byplanlægning i litteraturen, og hvordan hjælper dette os med at reflektere over dem begge?

Casestudiet af strategisk rumlig planlægning i Danmark bygger på dokumentanalyse af landsplanredegørelser og strategier, præsentationer, noter, analyser etc. udarbejdet i de tre planepisoder samt interviews med nationale, regionale og kommunale planlæggere involveret i udarbejdelsen af landsplanredegørelsen fra 2006, de tre planepisoder eller på anden måde vidende om strategisk planlægning i Danmark.

Forskningen er baseret på et kritisk perspektiv på strategisk rumlig planlægning, som tager udgangspunkt i empiriske undersøgelser af, hvordan strategisk rumlig planlægning udføres i praksis, og lægger med et afsæt heri op til en kritisk diskussion af nutidige teoretiseringer af strategisk rumlig planlægning. Afhandlingen argumenterer for, at en sådan forskningstilgang er nyttig for at stimulere kritisk refleksion over nutidige transformationer i strategisk rumlig planlægning i planlægningsteori og planlægningspraksis. Afhandlingen begrebsliggør nutidige transformationer af strategisk rumlig planlægning i teori og praksis som bestående af tre temaer

omhandlende: I) transformering af planlægningens hovedidé, II) re-forestilling af rum og III) ændring af skala og styringsformer. Afhandlingen analyserer nutidige strategiske rumlige planepisoder i Danmark gennem forskningsspørgsmål, der relaterer sig til hvert af disse temaer. Endvidere undersøger afhandlingen hvordan nutidige transformationer i dansk strategisk rumlig planlægning er påvirket og formet af den særlige socio-politiske kontekst, som de er en del af.

Afhandlingen skitserer tre hovedkonklusioner relateret til de tre temaer, som på forskellige måder karakteriserer naturen af ændringerne i strategisk rumlig planlægning i Danmark. For det første er planlægningens hovedidé blevet transformeret under neoliberal indflydelse. Strategisk rumlig planlægning i Danmark har i de senere år gennemgået en samordnet reorientering som en konsekvens af et tiltagende neoliberalt politisk klima. Dansk strategisk rumlig planlægning er i øjeblikket formet af igangværende magtkampe mellem bestridte planlægningsrationaliteter og rumlige logikker, udspillet mellem en vedholdende, regulativ, topdown planlægningsrationalitet rodfastet i spatial Keynesianisme og en tiltagende neoliberal, vækstorienteret planlægningstilgang, som betoner en ny rumlig logik af vækstcentre i større byer og byregioner. Den særlige danske sociale velfærdstilgang til strategisk rumlig planlægning er i stigende omfang under pres som følge af politiske ændringer. Som en konsekvens heraf synes momentum for en genopblomstring af strategisk rumlig planlægning i Danmark i øjeblikket at være tabt. I stedet synes strategisk rumlig planlægning i Danmark at være på tærsklen til en krise.

For det andet medførte de ændrede styreformsstrukturer en kærkommen mulighed for at re-forestille sig danmarkskortet. Nye relationelle forestillinger af rum og sted bevæger sig ind i strategisk rumlig planlægningspraksis i Danmark. Men i stedet for at erstatte eksisterende rumlige forestillinger og logikker bliver nye rumlige forestillinger ganske enkelt tilføjet den diskursive smeltedigel, fra hvilken planlæggere vælger hensigtsmæssige rumlige betydninger. På den ene side synes valget og hensigtsmæssigheden af bestemte rumlige forestillinger og logikker at bunde i en særlig dansk planlægningskultur snarere end bestemte forestillinger af rumlighed. På den anden side tyder evidensen fra casestudiet af strategisk rumlig planlægning i Danmark på, at relationelle rumlige forestillinger og 'fuzzy' rumlige repræsentationer bliver brugt som midler til at depolitisere nutidige strategiske rumlige planepisoder i Danmark. 'Fuzzy' rumlige repræsentationer synes at danne midlertidige rum for konsensus, mens de rumlige politikker i strategisk rumlig planlægning tilsøres.

For det tredje vinder nye skalaer og nye styringsformer frem i dansk rumlig planlægning som en konsekvens af statslige re-territoriserings- og

reskaleringsprocesser. Som en del af disse processer opstår nye 'soft spaces' i dansk rumlig planlægning som uformelle planlægningsrum på subnationale skalaer og nye uformelle samarbejdsorienterede former for strategisk rumlig planlægning på tværs af niveauer. De nye 'soft spaces' var tænkt af Miljøministeriet som virkelige skalaer for at håndtere rumlige problemer såsom kødannelse og spredt byvækst ved at integrere byudvikling og transportplanlægning på byregionsskala. I det nuværende neoliberale politiske klima i Danmark bliver de nye 'soft spaces' forvandlet til tværkommunale platforme for transportinfrastrukturlobbyarbejde og fremme af økonomisk udvikling. Som en konsekvens heraf medfører de nye 'soft spaces' kun i begrænset omfang integrering af politikker og bliver i stedet brugt til at lægge ekstra pres på den lovbestemte planlægning, potentielt agerende som løftestang for neoliberale transformationer af strategisk rumlig planlægning.

Denne afhandling konkluderer, at strategisk rumlig planlægning i Danmark er ved et potentielt vendepunkt mellem en genopblomstring og en krise i strategisk rumlig planlægning. Nye strategiske rumlige planlægningsidéer bliver i stigende omfang brugt som et røgslør for neoliberale transformationer af strategisk rumlig planlægning. Nutidige teoretiseringer af strategisk rumlig planlægning er ikke tilstrækkelige for at forstå dynamikkerne i nutidige strategiske rumlige planepisoder, samt hvordan disse episoder bliver formet og påvirket af deres socio-politiske kontekst. Denne afhandling repræsenterer et af de første forsøg på at udvikle et kritisk perspektiv på strategisk rumlig planlægning og bruge dette perspektiv til at kritisere nutidige neoliberale transformationer af strategisk rumlig planlægning i praksis. Afhandlingen opfordrer til yderligere forskning, teoretisering og kritik af, hvordan nutidig strategisk rumlig planlægning bliver transformeret under neoliberal indflydelse.

NOTES

- 1 Vi har desværre ikke en betegnelse på dansk, som jeg mener, er dækkende for 'strategic spatial planning'. Jeg har i mine interviews og samtaler med planlæggere brugt betegnelsen 'strategisk byplanlægning', som jeg mener, er nogenlunde dækkende, hvis man opfatter byen som ikke nødvendigvis begrænsende til en bestemt skala. Her har jeg dog valgt at være meget direkte i min oversættelse for at betone, at der er tale om en bestemt type planlægning, som er genstandsfelt for megen forskning og diskussion i internationale planlæggerkredse.

CHAPTER 1

STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING IN TRANSITION

“The world is opening up – spatial planning must contribute to preparing Denmark for change” (Ministry of the Environment, 2006, p.8).

INTRODUCTION

In the mid-2000s, the Danish Ministry of the Environment set out to rethink strategic spatial planning in Denmark. It was increasingly recognised within the ministry how societal changes, in particular globalisation, had led to new challenges for spatial planning, as illustrated in the opening statement in the 2006 national planning report quoted above. Furthermore, the liberal and conservative coalition government elected in 2001 had proposed widescale changes in the Danish governance structures, including the planning administration. These changes were to be implemented by January 2007 in the Danish structural reform. Whilst the structural reform set out to abolish the regional planning level in Denmark, the 2006 national planning report drew attention to urban regions as the new important scale for strategic spatial planning in Denmark (Ministry of the Environment, 2006). The national planning report presented a new *‘Map of Denmark’* articulating two new urban regions (see plate 2), as on one hand, vehicles for economic growth, strengthening Denmark’s international competitiveness, and on the other hand, as new strategic scales for dealing with pressing spatial issues such as congestion and urban sprawl.

At the scale of these urban regions, the Ministry of the Environment initiated in 2008 experiments with new forms of collaborative, multi-level strategic spatial planning processes in Eastern Jutland and Region Zealand. At the time, the ministry had already prepared a national planning directive for the Greater Copenhagen Area, as planning responsibilities for the urban area had been transferred to the state as part of the structural reform. As a consequence, very different approaches were taken to reinvent strategic spatial planning at the subnational scales across the country. Whilst the *‘Finger Plan 2007’* for the Greater Copenhagen Area (Ministry of the Environment, 2007a) seemed to represent a more traditional regulative planning approach, the new collaborative, multi-level strategy-making processes in Eastern Jutland and Region

Zealand seemed to be in the spirit of the new strategic spatial planning in the planning literature (Albrechts, 2004, 2006; Healey, 2007; Healey et al., 1997; Salet & Faludi, 2000). The three planning episodes¹ seemed to offer a solid empirical foundation for a case study of how strategic spatial planning in Denmark was being reinvented in a context of changing governance structures, societal changes, and transformations in politics.

In the planning literature, significant attention has been paid to the renewed interest in strategic spatial planning spreading across in Europe from the beginning of the 1990s² and in the UK from the beginning of the 2000s.³ The 'revival of strategic spatial planning' (Albrechts, 2004; Healey et al., 1997; Salet & Faludi, 2000) has been associated with a number of societal changes including economic restructuring, state re-territorialisation and rescaling, new forms of multi-level governance, a blurring of the boundaries between the public and private sector, neoliberal political agendas, growing environmental awareness, and new European planning discourses of trans-European spatial policy-making (Albrechts et al., 2003; Healey et al., 1997; Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010).

So far the revival of strategic spatial planning in Europe has been treated as rather unproblematic, celebrated amongst planning scholars as a welcome opportunity to recover the lost ground of the 1980s planning scepticism. The planning literature has been concerned with developing normative theorisations of strategic spatial planning against which planning practice could be measured. Such approaches have often resulted in disappointment with the performance of strategic spatial planning in practice (Albrechts et al., 2003; Albrechts, 2006; Healey, 2004, 2006b). So far only limited research has been carried out which critically examines how strategic spatial planning is being transformed in practice.⁴ How old and new ways of thinking about strategic spatial planning co-exist and struggle to influence planning practice. How strategic spatial planning ideas and European planning discourses travel into national and subnational planning contexts, and how these are interpreted in specific planning episodes.⁵ And how attempts to reinvent strategic spatial planning are deeply embedded and implicated in transformations in politics.⁶

In this PhD project, I set out to critically examine how strategic spatial planning in Denmark is being transformed in the context of the structural reform in 2007, the Ministry of the Environment's new strategic spatial planning initiatives at subnational scales presented in the 2006 national planning report, and transformations in Danish politics. I seek to develop an understanding of the nature of the changes in Danish strategic spatial planning, and how these changes correspond to the theorisations of

strategic spatial planning in the literature. I believe that a case study of how strategic spatial planning is being transformed in practice is helpful for stimulating critical reflection on how strategic spatial planning is evolving, and how we, as planning scholars, theorise about strategic spatial planning.

In this introductory chapter, I first briefly introduce a conceptual framework for making sense of how strategic spatial planning is being transformed in planning theory and planning practice. The conceptual framework is based on a critical perspective on strategic spatial planning, which is described further in chapter 2. Second, I present the main research question and sub-research questions of the study, together with the main methodological considerations. The research approach and main methodological considerations are outlined in detail in chapter 3. Third, I set out the research context of strategic spatial planning in Denmark, which forms the background for the empirical sub-case studies presented in chapter 4-6. Finally, I outline the main parts of the research and the structure of the PhD thesis.

A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING

The theorisations of European experiences with strategic spatial planning have been dominated by planning scholars such as Albrechts and Healey, who tend to combine empirical research of strategic spatial planning episodes with normative theorisations of how strategic spatial planning could take place in practice.⁷ Here, the performance of strategic spatial planning is often measured against the yardstick of normative theories. Newman (2008, p.1372) notes how this “searching for evidence of practice that may match up to a strategic planning ideal” might shift our attention too far from the current realities of how strategic spatial planning is carried out in practice.

In this research project, I develop a critical perspective on strategic spatial planning, which takes empirical research of how strategic spatial planning is carried out in practice as a point of departure for critical discussions on contemporary theorisations of strategic spatial planning in the literature. The critical perspective draws into attention how episodes of strategic spatial planning are influenced by the power dynamics of particular governance contexts and subverted by particular spatial politics or policy agendas. In chapter 2, I outline a conceptual framework for making sense of how strategic spatial planning is being transformed in planning theory and planning practice, and how these transformations are shaped by wider societal changes and socio-political contexts. In this introduction, I briefly introduce

three themes which run through this PhD thesis and constitute the main parts of the conceptual framework. The themes emerged, partly, from a review of the strategic spatial planning literature, and partly, from early findings from the case study of strategic spatial planning in Denmark. The three themes outlined below are: I) transforming the core idea of planning, II) re-imagining space, and III) changing scales and forms of governance.

First, the new strategic spatial planning is characterised by a substantially different understanding of the core idea of planning. In the mid-20th century, spatial planning was mainly concerned with growth management through preparation of structure plans. It was widely recognised that a strategic approach to land use planning was needed to manage the rapid population growth and urbanisation processes characterising Europe at the time. In welfare states, spatial planning played an important role in correcting market failures by distributing growth and economic development evenly across state territories, providing services for a reasonable quality of life (Healey et al., 1997). By the 1980s, this core idea of planning came under pressure from new neoliberal political agendas.⁸ Furthered by the economic crisis at the time and new discourses of globalisation and competition, it was increasingly expected that planning should promote growth and economic development, rather than provide services and regulate urban development. Whilst this new perspective first resulted in disbelief in planning and a roll back of the nation state in the 1980s, leaving more tasks to the private sector, the ideas were later put in the centre of the new strategic spatial planning emerging in the 1990s, playing an important role in transforming the core idea of planning in an increasingly neoliberal political climate. The new strategic spatial planning set out to promote a different set of planning rationalities and spatial logics. Spatial strategies were now envisioned as inspirational visions prepared through collaborative processes, rather than regulatory devices for land use planning. New spatial logics, promoting cities and regions as growth centres, were favoured at the expense of the more regulatory and distributive spatial logics traditionally characterising European welfare states. Strategic spatial planning was envisioned as contributing to economic development and international competitiveness, whilst still serving its 'old' functions of environmental protection and social justice under the label of sustainability.⁹

Second, the new strategic spatial planning promotes new ways of imagining space. It seeks to break with the Euclidean and absolute view of space, characterising spatial planning in the mid-20th century (Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Healey, 2007). The new ways of re-imagining space draws on ideas of relational geography developed in the

fields of human geography and sociology of planning.¹⁰ A relational understanding of spatiality draws into attention the multiple webs of relations or ‘spaces of flows’ (Castells, 1996) that intersect or transect urban areas, and opens up for multiple ways of understanding or getting to know an urban area (Healey, 2007). A relational perspective draws also attention to how planning cannot control spatial change. Instead, transformative power has to be generated through framing discourses in which persuasive spatial representations play an important role in mobilising support and building legitimacy (Healey, 2007). Recent innovations in the use of spatial representations in strategic spatial planning have taken inspiration from relational geography in the preparation of ‘fuzzy maps’ (Davoudi & Strange, 2009). It is argued that relational spatial concepts might play an important role in building consensus on spatial strategies (Healey, 2006b, 2007), although it remains unclear exactly how relational spatial concepts mobilise such support. Instead, the interpretative nature of the ‘fuzzy maps’ seems to offer convenient temporary spaces for consensus, whilst blurring the spatial politics of strategy-making and depoliticising¹¹ strategic spatial planning processes.

Third, the new strategic spatial planning emerged in a context of state re-territorialisation and rescaling of planning powers. The idea of the welfare state, as the predominant actor in and scale of spatial planning from the mid-20th century, came under pressure from new neoliberal political agendas emerging in the 1980s. Since the crisis of the Keynesian welfare state in the mid-20th century, Europe has experienced several processes of spatial restructuring in a search for new scales and forms of governance (Brenner, 2004a, 2004b). In the 1990s, urban regions were increasingly articulated as the new appropriate scale for policy coordination and promotion of economic development. Whilst these processes of rescaling initially was understood as a ‘hollowing out’ of the nation state (Jessop, 1997), the scale of urban regions were later conceptualised as ‘new state spaces’ (Brenner, 2004a) at which nation states compete. Increased attention was paid to how nation states continued to play a dominant role by ‘setting the rules of the game’ for strategy-making at lower scales, acting increasingly as metagovernors (Jessop, 2003). In the planning literature, attention has recently been paid to the new ‘soft spaces with fuzzy boundaries’ emerging in-between formal scales of planning as attempts to bind formal planning structures and processes together in an increasingly fragmented governance landscape (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2007, 2009a, 2010; Haughton et al., 2010). Whilst the new soft spaces have been celebrated as new innovative strategic spatial planning practices, furthering policy integration and policy delivery, limited attention

has been paid to the agenda-setting in soft spaces, and how policy agendas promoted in soft spaces might influence formal planning arenas.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH APPROACH

In this research project, I take a point of departure in the Ministry of the Environment's 2006 national planning report, which sets out to rethink strategic spatial planning in Denmark. I am interested in how strategic spatial planning in Denmark is changing in practice in a context of changing governance structures, attempts to rethink strategic spatial planning, and transformations in politics. I am interested in to what extent the changes in Danish strategic spatial planning reflect a turn towards the new theorisations of strategic spatial planning, or whether the changes in Danish strategic spatial planning seem to follow other trajectories. By applying a critical perspective on strategic spatial planning, I seek to explore to what extent the theorisations of strategic spatial planning in the literature are helpful for understanding the nature of the changes in strategic spatial planning in practice, and how we might have to revise contemporary theorisations in order to capture the changing dynamics of strategic spatial planning in practice. The main research question of the PhD project is:

Main research question: How can we understand the nature of the changes in Danish strategic spatial planning in practice, how do the changes in practice correspond with the theorisations of strategic spatial planning in the literature, and how does this help us to reflect on both?

The analysis of the main research question is guided by three sub-research questions, one for each of the three themes running through this PhD thesis. These sub-research questions are:

Sub-research question I: How are contested transformations of the core idea of planning manifested and handled in contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning?

Sub-research question II: How is space being re-imagined in the interplay between the spatial politics of new governance landscapes and innovations in the use of spatial representations in contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning?

Sub-research question III: In soft spaces, how are policy agendas being shaped, and how does policy-making seek to influence formal planning arenas?

I explore these research questions in a case study of strategic spatial planning in Denmark. The case study analyses transformations in Danish strategic spatial planning in a period between the 2006 and the 2010 national planning report. This has been a particularly interesting period to examine transformations in strategic spatial planning. On one hand, the period has been characterised by an inclination to experimentation with new forms of strategic spatial planning, and on the other hand, organisational restructurings within the Ministry of the Environment, rapid change of ministers, and transformations in politics. The case study has been informed by sub-case studies of three episodes of strategic spatial planning at subnational scales, reflecting an embedded case study design (Scholz & Tietje, 2002; Yin, 2003). All three planning episodes have been carried out as a response to the changing governance structures in Denmark and reflect in different ways innovations in thinking about strategic spatial planning in a Danish context. The three planning episodes are: I) the process of preparing a national planning directive for the Greater Copenhagen Area, also referred to as the *'Finger Plan 2007'*, II) the process of preparing a spatial framework for the Eastern Jutland urban region, and III) the process of preparing a spatial framework for Zealand beyond the Greater Copenhagen Area. The planning episodes in Eastern Jutland and Zealand were undertaken during the research period from 2008-2010, while the *'Finger Plan 2007'* for the Greater Copenhagen Area was published in 2007. The case study design and research approach are described in more detail in chapter 3.

There is a growing body of literature discussing various experiments with strategic spatial planning across Europe. However, so far limited attention has been paid to how strategic spatial planning ideas have manifested themselves in Danish planning practice.¹² This PhD project seeks to fill in some of the gaps in the current knowledge on strategic spatial planning in Europe by offering an account of the Danish experiences with strategic spatial planning. In this PhD project, I seek to develop an understanding of the nature of the changes in Danish strategic spatial planning, and place these within its socio-political context characterised by an increasing neoliberal political climate. I hope that this PhD thesis will stimulate critical reflections on the future of strategic spatial planning among planners and policy-makers involved in spatial planning in Denmark and beyond. Furthermore, I hope that the thesis will appeal to

a broader European audience concerned with transitions in strategic spatial planning ideas and practices.

The initial intention of the PhD project was to research new experiments with strategic spatial planning in Denmark as they were played out in practice. It was the hope that the experiences gathered from these experiments would be able to inform future planning episodes in Denmark and beyond. As the research progressed, I became more sensitive to the changing socio-political context within which the planning episodes were embedded, and I became increasingly aware of that there was a greater story to be told about the nature of the changes in Danish strategic spatial planning. It is this story that I set out to tell in this PhD thesis.

The story about contemporary changes in Danish strategic spatial planning is a story about how momentum for reinventing strategic spatial planning in Denmark in a period of changing governance structures and an inclination to experimentation with new forms of strategic spatial planning was lost. It is a story about how the political focus on strategic spatial planning dropped after some of the most innovative experiments with strategic spatial planning at subnational scales had just been launched. In this way, the Danish story of strategic spatial planning supports the evidence seen elsewhere in contemporary Europe, perhaps most noticeably in England, suggesting an emerging crisis of strategic spatial planning.

In the next section, I briefly set out the context within which the case study of strategic spatial planning in Denmark and the three planning episodes analysed in this PhD project should be understood.

THE CONTEXT OF TRANSITIONS IN STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING IN DENMARK

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the Ministry of the Environment's attempt to rethink strategic spatial planning in Denmark in the 2006 national planning report should be understood in the context of changing governance structures. The election of a liberal and conservative coalition government in Denmark in 2001 marked the starting point for a series of changes in the public sector, including the planning administration. Soon after the election, the government expressed needs to debureaucratise and streamline the public sector. A commission was appointed to explore future governance models, which presented its recommendations in the beginning of 2004. Later in the spring of 2004, the government presented its proposal

for a new governance model (Ministry of Interior and Health, 2004), which became effective from the 1st of January 2007.

As a consequence of the structural reform, the counties and the Greater Copenhagen Authority were abolished and the regional planning powers split between the municipalities and the state, reducing the Danish planning system from a three-tier to a two-tier system. At the same time, the municipalities were merged into larger units to accommodate their new planning tasks. On the regional level, five new administrative regions were created with the primary task of running the public hospitals. The regions were also given the task of preparing new non-regulatory regional spatial development plans aiming at encouraging local economic development. The new regional development planning was supported by new regional economic growth forums consisting of public and private stakeholders.

The division of tasks between the regional and municipal level in terms of spatial planning was not clear cut after the reform, as the intended content and function of the new regional spatial development plans remained rather vaguely formulated in the planning act. This resulted in a rather messy governance structure in which the regions' role in spatial planning remained ambiguous. In an attempt to prevent the new administrative regions from developing a significant role in regional development planning, Local Government Denmark established new platforms for cross-municipal cooperation and policy-making at the scale of the administrative regions. These new local government regional councils developed into counter platforms to the formal regional planning arenas, and have as such become important political platforms for continuous municipal contestation of the administrative regions' role in spatial planning (Sørensen et al., 2011). In this way, the structural reform created in practice a more fragmented governance landscape where policy coordination at scales above the municipal level increasingly had to take place through new forms of governance across scales and policy sectors.

The changing governance structures provided an opportunity to rethink spatial planning in Denmark. The 2006 national planning report discussed how the most densely populated areas in Denmark were showing signs of developing into major conurbations, suffering from urban sprawl and congestion (Ministry of the Environment, 2006). As a response, the Ministry of the Environment adopted a differentiated planning approach, dividing the Danish territory into five categories, each with a different set of challenges. The new planning approach was illustrated visually in the *'New Map of Denmark'*, articulating the Danish territory as consisting of metropolitan areas, peripheral areas, and in-between areas (Ministry of the

Environment, 2006) (see plate 2). The metropolitan areas comprised three of these planning categories, the Greater Copenhagen Area, Zealand beyond the Greater Copenhagen Area, and Eastern Jutland, in which specific spatial policies were formulated. As the scales of these areas did not match the boundaries of the new administrative regions, the Ministry of the Environment decided to initiate new processes of strategic spatial planning aiming at preparing overall spatial frameworks at the scale of the new urban regions. In the Greater Copenhagen Area, the Ministry of the Environment had already begun the process of preparing a national planning directive, entitled the *'Finger Plan 2007'* (Ministry of the Environment, 2007a), as it was to take over the planning responsibilities from the Greater Copenhagen Authority as part of the structural reform. In Eastern Jutland and Zealand, the ministry initiated new experiments with collaborative, multi-level strategic spatial planning processes with the municipalities in each urban region.

At the same time, discussions on the need for future investments in transport infrastructure surfaced in Denmark. In the beginning of 2008, the Infrastructure Commission presented its recommendations on the need for future investments in transport infrastructure (Infrastructure Commission, 2008). A year later, the Danish government presented a *'Green Transport Policy'* (Danish Government, 2009) with an investment frame until 2020 for a provisional amount of 94 billion Danish kroner. The Infrastructure Commission adopted largely the Ministry of the Environment's spatial logic of two emerging conurbations as the point of departure for their recommendations. As a follow-up on the *'Green Transport Policy'*, the Ministry of Transport initiated in 2009 strategic transport analyses running until 2013, examining the need for investments in transport infrastructure in the Greater Copenhagen Area and Eastern Jutland (Ministry of Transport, 2009a, 2009b). The experiments with new forms of strategic spatial planning were thus initiated at a time where discussions on new investments in transport infrastructure were high on the political agenda at all levels of governance. For many municipalities the new strategic spatial planning processes were seen as convenient platforms for preparing cross-municipal proposals for new investments in transport infrastructure in their urban region.

Since the election of a liberal and conservative coalition government in 2001, a series of changes have been implemented in the Ministry of the Environment, significantly changing the planning administration and foundation for strategic spatial planning at the national level. In 2003 the National Spatial Planning Department, created in 1993 to strengthen the national political interests in spatial planning, lost its position as an independent ministry department and was moved to the Danish

Forestry and Nature Agency. As part of the structural reform in 2007, strategic spatial planning responsibilities at the national level were placed within the newly established Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning, which besides the central administration in Copenhagen, was decentralised into national environment centres spread across Denmark. In 2010 the Danish Forestry and Nature Agency and the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning were replaced by the Danish Nature Agency, which, whilst still being responsible for national spatial planning, seems to have a more sector-oriented planning portfolio with nature preservation and water management as its main tasks. As a consequence of these continuous changes and restructurings in the Ministry of the Environment, large parts of the planning administration have been dismantled, leaving strategic spatial planning as only one among many responsibilities of the new Danish Nature Agency.

The new experiments with strategic spatial planning were carried out in a period of organisational restructuring within the Ministry of the Environment, which meant that the responsible minister and leading planners on the 2006 national planning report left the ministry soon after the planning report was published. As a result, a new agency and group of planners were in charge of implementing the spatial policies of a previous era. The task was further complicated by the appointment of a new more liberal Minister of the Environment, who did not share the same perspectives on strategic spatial planning as the previous minister. The new strategic spatial planning experiments were thus to be implemented in a more neoliberal political climate in which strategic spatial planning as an activity and entity increasingly were being questioned.

By the end of 2010, the political focus on strategic spatial planning had changed significantly. The Ministry of the Environment was yet to revise the *'Finger Plan 2007'*,¹³ and the strategy-making processes in Eastern Jutland and Zealand had ended without any immediate response to follow up the initiatives. The ministry had published a new national planning report (Ministry of the Environment, 2010e), which was widely criticised in the Danish planning community for being a 'weak cup of tea' (Jensen, 2009)¹⁴. Furthermore, the Danish government had just issued a proposal to dismantle part of the planning act, restricting urban and commercial development in rural areas (Danish Government, 2010). This proposal was part of government initiatives to combat the declining growth and employment rates in peripheral areas, as a consequence of the global credit crunch. Whilst the future of strategic spatial planning in Denmark a few years earlier had seemed bright and promising, these prospects had by the end of the 2000s turned gloomy.

Empirical problem:

In the mid-2000s, the Danish Ministry of the Environment sets out to rethink strategic spatial planning in Denmark in a context of changing governance structures, globalisation, and transformations in politics. New experiments with strategic spatial planning are launched at subnational scales, which seem to be in the spirit of the new theorisations of strategic spatial planning in the literature. At the same time, these experiments are to be implemented in an increasingly neoliberal political climate.

Conceptual problem:

How can we develop a conceptual framework for understanding contemporary transformations of strategic spatial planning?

Methodological problem:

How can we research transformations in Danish strategic spatial planning in practice?

Main research question:

How can we understand the nature of changes in Danish strategic spatial planning in practice, how do the changes in practice correspond to the theorisations of strategic spatial planning in the literature, and how does this help us to reflect on both?

Theme I:

Transforming the core idea of planning

Theme II:

Re-imagining space

Theme III:

Changing scales and forms of governance

Sub-research question I:

How are contested transformations of the core idea of planning manifested and handled in contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning?

Sub-research question II:

How is space being re-imagined in the interplay between the spatial politics of new governance landscapes and innovations in the use of spatial representations in contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning?

Sub-research question III:

In soft spaces, how are policy agendas being shaped, and how does policy-making seek to influence formal planning arenas?

Sub-themes:

Ia) planning rationalities
Ib) spatial logics

Sub-themes:

IIa) relational geography
IIb) spatial politics

Sub-themes:

IIIa) soft spaces
IIIb) agenda-setting

Figure 1.1: Overview of the different parts of the research

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PHD THESIS

This PhD thesis has been written as a hybrid between a collection of journal papers and a monograph. Apart from the introduction and conclusions, the thesis is divided into three parts. In **Part A**, I set out the theoretical and methodological approach behind the research. In chapter 2, I develop a critical perspective on strategic spatial planning and outline a conceptual framework for analysing of the nature of the changes in strategic spatial planning in practice. The three themes outlined in this introduction are discussed in detail and operationalised into sub-research questions. In chapter 3, I present the main methodological considerations behind the research and explain in detail how the research was carried out.

In **Part B**, I present the three sub-case studies of strategic spatial planning at subnational scales in Denmark. The chapters 4-6 present in turn accounts of the planning episodes in the Greater Copenhagen Area, the Eastern Jutland urban region, and Region Zealand. I have included narratives of these planning episodes in the PhD thesis, as I see great value in these thick case study descriptions in terms of outlining the complexity of strategic spatial planning in practice.

Part C contains three journal papers, each discussing one of the three sub-research questions with a point of departure in the three planning episodes presented in Part B. Chapter 7 discusses how contested transitions in planning rationalities and spatial logics have shaped the three planning episodes. Chapter 8 explores the interplay between the spatial politics of new governance landscapes and innovations in the use of spatial representations in each planning episode. Chapter 9 analyses how policy agendas are shaped in each planning episode, and how policy agendas in soft spaces seek to influence formal planning arenas.

The final chapter in this PhD thesis, chapter 10, synthesises the overall conclusions from the three papers and discusses the main research question. An overview of the different parts of the research is illustrated in figure 1.1.

NOTES

- 1 Here, I use the term 'episode' to describe a limited period of time where particular efforts are made to carry out strategic spatial planning initiatives. I adopt the term from Healey (2007, p.32), who uses an 'episode' to describe "a period when a particular effort is being made to articulate a strategic response to urban area development."
- 2 See Albrechts (1998, 2004, 2006), Albrechts et al. (2001), Albrechts et al. (2003), Balducci (2003), Balducci et al. (2011), Healey, (2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2007), Healey et al. (1997), Kunzmann (1996, 2001), Salet & Faludi (2000), and Sartorio (2005).

- 3 See Allmendinger (2011), Allmendinger & Haughton (2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2010), Davoudi & Strange (2009), Harris & Hooper (2004), Haughton et al. (2010), Morphet (2011), Nadin (2007), and Tewdwr-Jones et al. (2010).
- 4 Healey (2007) examines how strategic spatial planning ideas have changed over a period of 50 years in the Amsterdam area, the Milan area, and the Cambridge sub-region.
- 5 Davoudi & Strange (2009) and Healey (2004, 2006b, 2007) investigate to what extent ideas of relational geography have inspired spatial representations prepared through episodes of strategic spatial planning.
- 6 Allmendinger (2011) analyses how spatial planning has been transformed in the UK under New Labour.
- 7 See for example Albrechts' (2004) four track model of a strategic spatial planning process, Albrechts' (2006, p.1149) "workable normative definition of the 'what' and 'how' of strategic spatial planning", and Healey's (2007) four key dimensions of urban region strategy-formation processes.
- 8 Here, I understand neoliberalism as a political agenda which seeks to promote economic development by liberalising the market. In terms of spatial planning, neoliberalism has led to an increased concern with promoting economic development through planning activities and concerns with effectiveness and policy delivery in planning processes.
- 9 See Næss (2009) for a discussion of how the definition of 'sustainability' has been transformed in Danish spatial planning under neoliberal influence in order to give priority to economic development.
- 10 See Graham & Healey (1999), Graham & Marvin (2001), Healey (2004, 2006b, 2007), and Davoudi & Strange (2009).
- 11 Here, I understand depoliticisation as conscious processes of hiding or blurring the spatial politics of strategy-making, furthered by a neoliberal political agenda. Depoliticisation does not result in strategic spatial planning processes 'without politics'. Instead, we might understand depoliticisation a conscious political strategy to blur the *realpolitik* (Flyvbjerg, 1991) of strategy-making, as part of wider neoliberal political agendas transforming the state spatial project of strategic spatial planning. I will return to this issue in chapter 8.
- 12 Jørgensen et al. (1997) analyse how the Danish government in the 1990s set out to promote Copenhagen's international competitiveness by developing the urban district of Ørestad. Jensen (1999) explores in his PhD thesis connections between European and Danish spatial planning discourses.
- 13 The Ministry of the Environment has since published a discussion paper on the '*Finger Plan 2012*' (Ministry of the Environment, 2011), which is in public hearing until the beginning of June 2011. I will reflect on what the content of the discussion paper might tell us about the future of strategic spatial planning in Denmark in chapter 10.
- 14 Kirsten Jensen was the alias for an anonymous municipal planner who wrote a letter to the editor in the Danish planning journal *Byplan* criticising the draft of the Ministry of the Environment's new national planning report.

PART A

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUALISING THE NEW STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING

This chapter develops a critical perspective on strategic spatial planning, which sets out to examine contemporary theorisations of strategic spatial planning in the literature with a point of departure in empirical research of how strategic spatial planning is carried out in practice. The chapter proposes a conceptual framework for making sense of transformations in strategic spatial planning in theory and practice. Here, the new strategic spatial planning is conceptualised as: I) transforming the core idea of planning, II) re-imagining space, and III) changing scales and forms of governance. Early drafts of the theoretical work presented in this chapter have been presented at the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) PhD workshop at Seili Island in 2010 and the 24th annual AESOP conference in Helsinki in 2010.

INTRODUCTION

During the 1990s a renewed interest in strategic spatial planning emerged in planning practice and academia after a decade of considerable planning scepticism. The ‘revival of strategic spatial planning’ (Albrechts, 2004; Healey et al., 1997; Salet & Faludi, 2000) led to a huge number of experiments with preparation of spatial strategies at supranational, transnational, national, subnational and regional scales.¹ The new strategic spatial planning experiments were paralleled by an increasing academic interest in promoting new ways of theorising about planning under the label of ‘strategic spatial planning’. The revival of strategic spatial planning can thus be understood as a mix of innovations in planning practice and planning theory.

Several parallel processes have in different ways contributed in shaping what today is referred to as strategic spatial planning. First, great attention was paid to the many spatial strategy-making experiments in practice, resulting in a rich vein of literature on strategic spatial planning.² Second, processes of preparing an overall spatial framework at the scale of the European Union, the so-called ‘European Spatial

Development Perspective' (ESDP) (CSD, 1999), resulted in a new planning terminology based around the concept of 'spatial planning' (Faludi & Waterhout, 2002; Haughton et al., 2010; Healey, 2007). Here, spatial planning was invented as a Euro-English term trying to capture the essence of various European planning traditions such as the French 'aménagement du territoire', the Dutch 'ruimtelijke ordening' and the German 'raumordnung' (CEC, 1997). Third, attempts were made to reinvent spatial planning in national planning contexts. In Denmark, the beginning of the 1990s marked the beginning of a new era of thinking about strategic spatial planning in relational to national politics. The ideas materialised in the 1992 national planning report (Ministry of the Environment, 1992) and the creation of a National Spatial Planning Department in 1993. About 10 years later, the Royal Town Planning Institute and New Labour sought to reinvent British planning in the beginning of the 2000s under the label of 'spatial planning' (Allmendinger, 2011; Morphet, 2011; Nadin, 2007). Fourth, new ideas of 'planning through debate' (Healey, 1992, 1997) and relational geography (Friedmann, 1993; Graham & Healey, 1999) surfaced in academia promoting new ways of theorising about spatial planning in the literature.

In the planning literature, the new strategic spatial planning was articulated as a substantially different activity than traditional land use planning (Albrechts, 2004, 2006; Healey, 2007; Healey et al., 1997). Planning scholars saw the renewed interest in strategic spatial planning as an opportunity to rebrand planning and transform planning practice. This meant that strategic spatial planning was defined just as much by what it was not, as by what it was (Haughton et al., 2010). As a consequence, it is difficult to find a clear-cut definition of strategic spatial planning in the planning literature (Friedmann, 2004). Instead, the understanding(s) of strategic spatial planning seem to remain somewhat implicit among planning theorists (Needham, 2000), deeply rooted in different European planning cultures. Strategic spatial planning might thus mean different things in different contexts and planning cultures. This makes strategic spatial planning a rather elusive concept. On one hand, strategic spatial planning has been used as an umbrella term to describe a range of different planning activities taking place across Europe since the beginning of the 1990s at scales above the local governance level. On the other hand, it has been used within planning theory and planning communities to promote a new set of normative ideas about what constitutes 'good planning'.

In this PhD project, I am not seeking to explicitly define the concept of strategic spatial planning. Instead, I want to open up the concept and explore the different

ways it is being used in practice and theory. Below, I quote three attempts to specify the meaning of strategic spatial planning in the literature, which capture different aspects of its ideas and practices. We might understand strategic spatial planning as:

“... the construction of new institutional arenas within structures of government that are themselves changing. The motivations for these new efforts are varied, but the objectives have typically been to articulate a more coherent spatial logic for land use regulation, resource protection, and investments in regeneration and infrastructure. Strategic frameworks and visions for territorial development, with an emphasis on place qualities and the spatial impacts and integration of investments, complement and provide a context for specific development projects.” (Albrechts et al., 2003, p.113)

“... self-conscious collective efforts to re-imagine a city, urban region or wider territory and to translate the result into priorities for area investment, conservation measures, strategic infrastructure investments and principles of land use regulation. The term ‘spatial’ brings into focus the ‘where of things’, whether state or in movement; the protection of special ‘places’ and sites; the interrelations between different activities and networks in an area; and significant intersections and nodes in an area which are physically co-located.” (Healey, 2004, p.46)

“... first, a conceptual apparatus, second, a broad discourse about a particular moment in the history of planning thought and practice, which is presented as something of a paradigm shift within planning, and third, a still evolving set of understandings about what constitutes ‘good planning’ which is being codified and legitimized through academic usage and by professional and governmental bodies.” (Haughton et al., 2010, p.1)

From the above quotations, we get a sense of what is at stake in contemporary attempts to transform planning practices and conceptions of strategic spatial planning in the planning literature. In this PhD project, I propose a conceptual framework for making sense of these transformations in strategic spatial planning in theory and practice. The framework is made up of three themes, which in different ways

characterise how strategic spatial planning is being transformed. The three themes have emerged, partly, from my review of how strategic spatial planning is theorised in the planning literature, and partly, from early findings from the three sub-case studies of strategic spatial planning episodes analysed in this PhD project. The three themes are: I) transforming the core idea of planning, II) re-imagining space, and III) changing scales and forms of governance.

In the exploration of these three themes in planning practice, I apply a critical perspective on strategic spatial planning. In the planning literature, the normative theorisations of strategic spatial planning have recently been criticised for being “too far from the current realities of planning practice” (Newman, 2008, p.1372). It is being argued that these theories largely are unhelpful for understanding how strategic spatial planning is taking place in practice. Such arguments feed into the ongoing debates within planning theory about a potential widening between planning theory and planning practice, and the role of planning theory in supporting planning practice.³ Sartorio (2010) has suggested that the gap between planning theory and planning practice has widened over the last decades to a point where we might consider them as two distinct disciplines. Whilst Friedmann (1998) notes that it is never easy to theorise inside a profession that is grounded in practice, others have argued for empirically grounded approaches to theorising. Flyvbjerg (1991, 2006) emphasises for example how theoretical knowledge can be derived from in-depth case study research of how planning is carried out in practice.⁴

With a point of departure in the latter argument, this chapter develops a critical perspective on strategic spatial planning, which seeks to explore how strategic spatial planning is carried out in practice as a point of departure for theorising about strategic spatial planning. In this chapter, I outline a conceptual framework for making sense of transformations in strategic spatial planning in theory and practice. I then use this framework as a point of departure for empirical research of contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning in practice (Part B), and subsequently for critical examination of contemporary theorisations of strategic spatial planning in the literature (Part C).

The chapter is structured as follows. The first section outlines the main driving forces behind the revival of strategic spatial planning in European planning practice. Here, I distinguish between wider societal changes as external driving forces and the socio-political context as internal driving forces. I argue that changes in the context of strategic spatial planning are shaped by the dynamics between wider societal changes and the socio-political context within which planning episodes are embedded. The

following section discusses contemporary transformations in the planning practice and theorisations of strategic spatial planning within the three themes highlighted above. The chapter ends by presenting a conceptual framework and sub-research questions, guiding the empirical research of contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning.

THE REVIVAL OF STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING

The revival of strategic spatial planning in Europe in the beginning of the 1990s should be understood in the context of wider societal changes, significantly changing the context of spatial planning. The planning literature lists a number of societal changes as driving forces for the revival of strategic spatial planning in Europe (Albrechts et al., 2003, Healey et al., 1997). Healey et al. (1997) distinguish between exogenous (external) and endogenous (internal) driving forces, reflecting an institutional understanding of the interactions between wider structuring forces of society and the active work of actors in realising and shaping these structuring forces. In this chapter, I draw on the same dynamics between exogenous and endogenous driving forces in changing the context of strategic spatial planning episodes. I refer to these driving forces as wider societal changes and socio-political contexts. In this section, I discuss these driving forces in turn and present a framework for understanding how the dynamics between wider societal changes and socio-political contexts change the context of strategic spatial planning episodes.

WIDER SOCIETAL CHANGES AS EXTERNAL DRIVING FORCES

The changing economic structures in Europe have led to new modes of production characterised by increasing global competition, outsourcing of industries to developing countries, and increasingly reliance of service-based and knowledge-intensive companies. The economic restructurings have promoted a more globalised society characterised by dual processes of increasing integration and fragmentation, resulting in an increasingly uncertain context for spatial planning. In many ways, the new economic structure and a more globalised society have forced the state to rethink its governance structures and role in spatial planning. As a response to the changing economic structures, European nation states have experienced several rounds of spatial restructuring since the crisis of the Keynesian welfare states in the mid-20th century (Brenner, 2004a, 2004b). Through these processes of state re-territorialisation

and rescaling, increased attention has been paid to the scale of urban regions as the 'new state spaces' (Brenner, 2004a) at which nation states compete.

The processes of state re-territorialisation and rescaling can be understood in the context of neoliberal political agendas emerging in the 1980s, which increasingly have questioned the state's role in spatial planning. At the time, the neoliberal political climate resulted in a roll back of the nation state and an increasingly blurring of the boundaries between the public and private sector, among other things through the creation of new forms of public-private partnerships. As part of these processes, the role of the state in spatial planning matters was significantly transformed from the provider to the enabler of development (Healey et al., 1997), reflecting what Harvey (1989) has referred to as a turn towards urban entrepreneurialism.

The changing governance structures have opened up for experiments with new forms of metropolitan governance, multi-level governance, and joined-up policy-making at the scale of urban regions (Heinelt & Kübler, 2005; Salet et al., 2003). Here, special attention has been given to urban regions as the new scale for economic development and policy coordination. However, the success of experiments with new forms of governance in urban regions has often remained limited in regions without any significant institutional history on which the experiments could draw (Albrechts et al., 2003; Salet et al., 2003).

The attention towards urban regions has been supported by European planning discourses and practices of an emerging trans-European spatial planning policy community. These discourses and practices have been supported by the preparation of the ESDP (CSD, 1999), which has promoted a new planning terminology and spatial logics. In the UK for example, European planning discourses are said to have promoted a 'spatial turn' in British spatial planning (Harris & Hooper, 2004; Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010). In other cases, access to EU regional development funds has provided a strong financial impetus for new strategic spatial planning experiments (Healey et al., 1997). The European planning perspective has also promoted a strong emphasis on competitiveness. Spatial strategies have increasingly become concerned with positioning of urban regions within an international competitive landscape by promoting regional identities and images, highlighting each region's particular regional and local assets (Albrechts et al. 2003; Healey et al., 1997). In these attempts, urban regions seem to seek inspiration from each other, although it is not quite clear how the ways of making spatial strategies diffuse from one place to another (Healey, 2007). However, it seems evident that strategic spatial planning has become fashionable and

that it in many cases simply are desires to be in fashion that drives strategic spatial planning initiatives.

The competitiveness policy agenda has been paralleled by an increasing environmental awareness among politicians, lobby groups, and the general public. The increased environmental awareness has manifested itself in policy agendas of sustainable development, and more recently ambitions of reducing CO²-emissions and combat climate changes and flooding. When policy agendas of competitiveness and environmental concerns seem to co-exist, spatial strategies have often attempted to transfer environmental concerns into positioning strategies. Such attempts can be identified in the Danish Ministry of the Environment and Energy's national planning report from 1997, which articulates Denmark as 'a green room in the European house' (Jensen, 1999; Ministry of the Environment and Energy, 1997). In many cases, evidence suggests that environmental issues remain part of the policy talk rather than the actual spatial policies (Healey et al., 1997).

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT AS INTERNAL DRIVING FORCE

Whilst the planning literature tends to emphasise broader societal changes when highlighting the main driving forces behind a revival of strategic spatial planning in Europe, the external driving forces do only cover part of the motivation. As mentioned earlier, national planning communities have played an important role in reinventing strategic spatial planning in Denmark and the UK. However, so far only limited attention has been paid to, to what extent specific socio-political contexts and changes in these shape strategic spatial planning episodes. Allmendinger (2011) analyse for example how spatial planning in the UK has been transformed under New Labour. Others, like Healey (2007), suggest that strategic spatial planning initiatives cannot be tied to particular processes of political and economic configuration. Instead, processes of strategic spatial planning should be understood as 'situated practices', "deeply structured by the specificities of time and place" (Healey, 2007, p.175). Here, the inspiration for new strategic spatial planning initiatives might come from a strong planning culture with emphasis on spatial planning, competition for national funds, rescaling of planning powers to regional scales, specific policy agendas being promoted by key strategic actors and leaders, and local pressures from citizens or/and business groups (Healey, 2007; Healey et al., 1997). However, in practice there seems to be limited evidence of strategic spatial planning exercises being initiated as local responses to pressing local and regional problems (Albrechts et al., 2003).

This raises a number of important questions about how we might understand

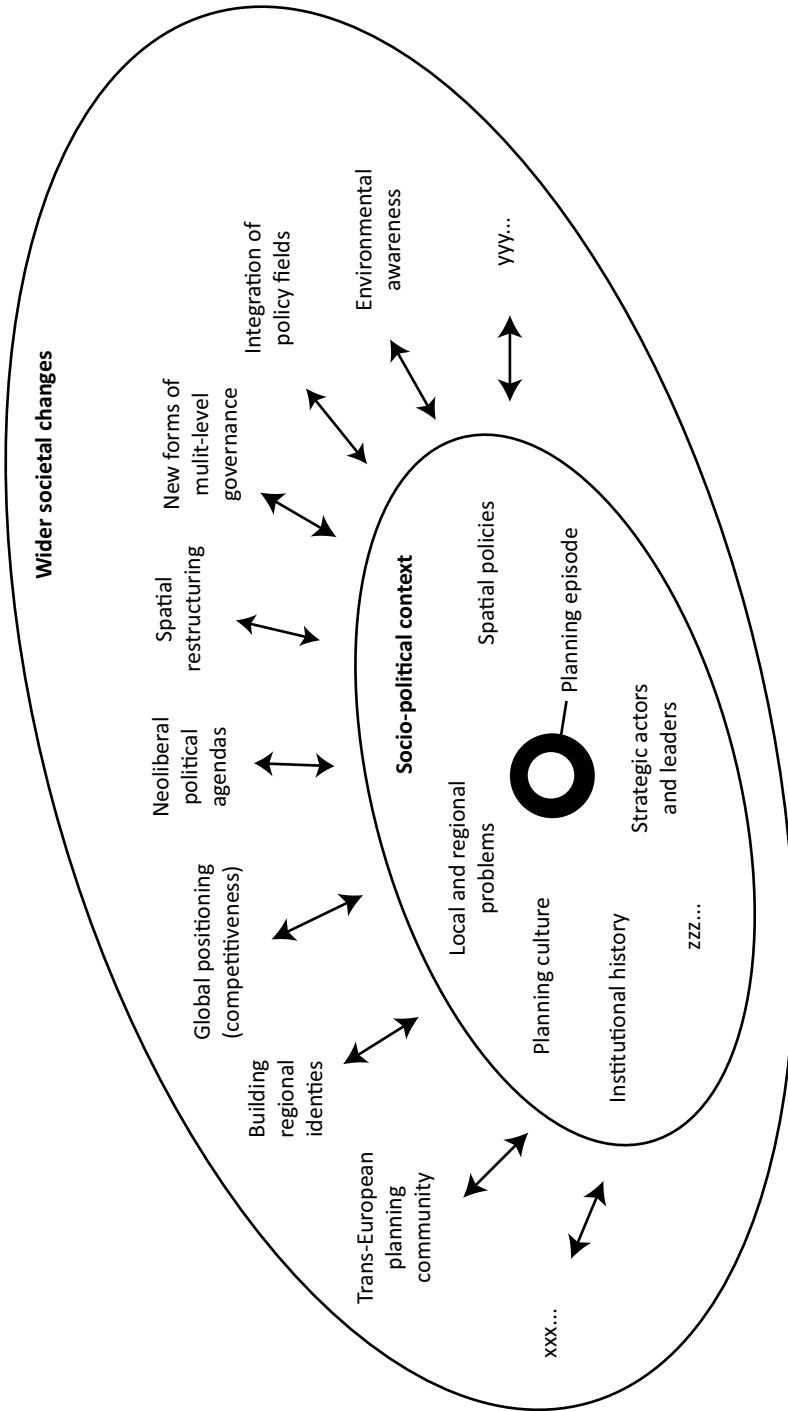


Figure 2.1: Framework for understanding how the dynamics between wider societal changes and the socio-political context shape the context of episodes of strategic spatial planning (based on Albrecht et al. (2003) and Healey et al. (1997)).

changes in the context of strategic spatial planning, and how these changes influence episodes of strategic spatial planning. Figure 2.1 illustrate how the dynamics between wider societal changes and the socio-political context might shape context for episodes of strategic spatial planning.⁵

TRANSFORMATIONS IN STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

The revival of strategic spatial planning discussed in the previous section received considerable attention from planning scholars, who saw the renewed interest in spatial planning as an opportunity to rebrand strategic spatial planning and transform planning practices. This section outlines three ways in which the new strategic spatial planning sets out to transform strategic spatial planning. The three themes are introduced briefly here and discussed in more detail in chapter 7-9.

TRANSFORMING THE CORE IDEA OF PLANNING

The rapid population growth and urbanisation across Europe in the mid-20th century forced national governments to initiate some kind of growth management. In many European countries, a strategic approach to land-use regulation became widespread (Healey et al., 1997). In this period of spatial Keynesianism (Brenner, 2004a, 2004b), spatial planning played an important role in distributing urban development and growth evenly across its territory, correcting market failures, and providing services for a reasonable quality of life (Healey et al., 1997). The state played the predominant role in spatial planning, which was carried out topdown by bureaucrats in the public sector or state commissioned planning experts. Building on a mix of spatial visioning and scientific knowledge, spatial planning was primarily concerned with laying out spatial structures for urban areas through structure plans, master plans and blueprints, with only little attention paid to how these plans would be implemented in practice.

By the 1980s, this understanding of planning came under pressure from an increasing neoliberal political climate. Plans and spatial frameworks were generally considered too inflexible and outdated to respond to the changing economic structures. This planning scepticism led to an increased concern with strategic projects, promoting primarily new transport infrastructures or urban regeneration (Healey et al., 1997). The decline in economic activity and growth meant that planning to a higher extent was directed towards the private market and re-articulated as a vehicle for fostering

economic development.

In the beginning of the 1990s, a renewed interest and belief in strategic spatial planning re-emerged in Europe. In the planning literature, the new strategic spatial planning was theorised as a substantial different activity than traditional land use planning (Albrechts, 2004, 2006; Healey, 2007; Healey et al., 1997). The shift in the theorisation of strategic spatial planning has focused on both the substance and the procedure of planning. First, the articulation of strategic spatial planning as a vehicle for fostering economic growth in a European competitive context resulted in a new set of spatial logics centred on major cities and urban regions as key sites for economic activity. Rather than focusing on expanding the welfare state by promoting equal development across the state territory, the new spatial strategies were concerned with promoting the neoliberal competitive state (Brenner, 2004b). As a consequence, policy attention and investments were increasingly directed towards major cities and urban regions in order to promote economic development and competitiveness. Secondly, drawing on interpretive and communicative planning ideas, strategic spatial planning was theorised as collective efforts to assign meaning to an urban area, bringing together actors with a stake in an urban area (Healey, 1997, 2007). Spatial strategies were understood to emerge from strategy formation processes in which strategies were just as much found or recognised as explicitly created (Healey, 2007; Mintzberg, 1994). Emphasis was put on spatial policy-making rather than preparation of plans.

Through these processes the core idea of planning was substantially transformed in planning practice and theory as a response to wider societal changes and transformations in socio-political contexts. In chapter 7, I discuss these transformations of the core idea of planning further, and explore how transformations in the substance and procedure of planning are manifested and handled in contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning in Denmark. Furthermore, I discuss how these transformations are influenced by changes in the socio-political context, which seem to be characterised by an increasingly neoliberal political climate.

RE-IMAGINING SPACE

New ways of imagining and representing space and place have played a crucial role in the resurgence of strategic spatial planning. In the mid-20th century, the core spatial logics were based around a division between the urban and rural and preservation of green areas, such as the web between the fingers in the 'Finger Plan' for the Greater Copenhagen Area (1947), the green belt around London (1944) and the green heart

in the Randstad (1958). In the 1960s and 1970s, a more systems view of planning emerged, where cities and regions were conceptualised as complex systems, which only could be understood and monitored through models developed from a spatial science approach (Allmendinger, 2009). Spatial planning became concerned with modelling and forecasting, developing spatial laws and organising principles around which urban development could be organised, such as the German central place theory (Christaller, 1966; Davoudi & Strange, 2009).

The increased emphasis on spatial planning's role in facilitating economic development led to a more place-based planning approach, focusing on promoting local and regional assets in a European competitive context. Space was increasingly understood from a network perspective leading to a new emphasis on connectivity rather than physical distance. Inspired by European planning discourses a new vocabulary of networks, webs, flows, nodes, and hubs were introduced as new organising principles (Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Healey, 2006b). The new role of spatial strategies as inspirational visions and spatial policy documents meant that spatial representations increasingly were seen as persuasive devices, playing a crucial role in mobilising support for spatial strategies. Rather than depicting land uses or distributive spatial policies, spatial representations became increasingly abstract and impressionistic, reflecting what Davoudi & Strange (2009) have referred to as 'fuzzy maps'.

In the planning literature, there has been an increased interest in the ideas of relational geography developed in the fields of human geography and sociology of planning. Drawing on these ideas, the new theorisations of strategic spatial planning have encouraged planning practice to embrace relational conceptions of space and place in order to grasp the multiple spaces of flows intersecting and transecting urban areas (Castells, 1996; Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Graham & Healey, 1999; Graham & Marvin, 2001; Healey, 2004, 2006b, 2007). The new relational understandings of spatiality set out to distance strategic spatial planning from Euclidean geography, which is deeply rooted in the planning tradition. This has led Friedman (1993, p.482) to note that "it is tempting to argue that if the traditional model [of Euclidean geography] has to go, then the very idea of planning must be abandoned." In the planning literature, it was increasingly recognised that planners alone could not control spatial change. Instead, it was argued that transformative power in complex governance contexts had to be generated through framing discourses in which persuasive spatial representations play a crucial role in mobilising support and building legitimacy (Healey, 2007). These spatial imaginations were not only limited to an exclusive

group of technical planners, but were encouraged to capture how space was lived and understood by its inhabitants (Davoudi & Strange, 2009).

The new abstract and impressionistic spatial representations emerging as part of the revival of strategic spatial planning led to an increased research interest in the role of spatial representations in strategic spatial planning processes at various scales⁶ and conceptions of space and place underpinning these representations.⁷ One of the ways, in which planning practice has tried to see the world through webs, flows and networks, has been through 'fuzzy maps' (Davoudi & Strange, 2009). Rather than relying on Euclidean geometric accuracy, the new 'fuzzy maps' depict the planned territory as fluid with fuzzy boundaries (Davoudi & Strange, 2009). Despite the increasing interest in relational geography in planning theory, academics remain largely disappointed with the degree to which these ideas have penetrated planning practice (Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Healey, 2004). In practice, the ideas of relational geography have more or less unconsciously been brought into a discursive melting pot full of various spatial conceptions and logics, from which planners select whatever they find appropriate to accrete meanings to specific planning contexts (Healey, 2004). This reflects that bringing relational geography into planning practice remains a normative planning theoretical project, which might be picked up by planning practice for various reasons.

In chapter 8, I discuss the new relational understandings of spatiality promoted in the planning literature further, and explore to what extent these new ways of re-imagining spaces have travelled into representations of space. Furthermore, I explore to what extent recent innovations in the use of spatial representations are being deployed in contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning, and I discuss how the spatial politics of strategy-making seem to influence representations of space.

CHANGING SCALES AND FORMS OF GOVERNANCE

The new ways of re-imagining space and place were tightly connected to the new scales and new forms of governance being promoted by the end of the 20th century. As already highlighted, the state played the predominant role in spatial planning in the mid-20th century. Spatial planning took place within pre-defined boundaries inserted in nested governance systems with clear division of tasks and responsibilities. By the 1980s and 1990s, the state's role was significantly being redefined through processes of re-territorialisation and rescaling (Brenner, 2004a, 2004b). Rather than resulting in simple redistributions of power from one scale to another, or the total disappearance of some scales as they were superseded by others, processes of re-territorialisation

and rescaling led a more complex picture of state spatiality in which different scales and spaces co-exist in complex governance landscapes, rather than being organised in nested hierarchies.

By the end of the 2000s, attention was increasingly paid to the new soft spaces emerging in-between formal scales of spatial planning as delivery vehicles for strategic state projects.⁸ The new soft spaces emerging in British spatial planning should be understood in the context of a particular British approach to spatial planning, concerned with devolution, effectiveness, policy integration, and policy delivery (Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Haughton et al., 2010; Morphet, 2011), shaped by New Labour's pragmatic view on spatial planning, focusing on 'what works' in terms of implementation and policy delivery (Allmendinger, 2011). In the planning literature, the new soft spaces have been promoted as some of the most innovative practices in spatial planning today, played an important role in filling in the gaps between formal planning structures and processes, providing the 'glue' that binds the formal scales of planning and governance together (Haughton et al., 2010). It is argued that soft spaces by working at the scale of real-world geographies are able to treat problems and opportunities in new ways across sectors and scales, and thereby play an important role in policy integration. Soft spaces are said to represent important arenas for bringing together important actors for policy delivery and economic development. They are promoted as important sites for policy delivery, placing strategy-making outside the lengthy nature of statutory processes, not hampered by the formal requirements and rigidities of statutory planning. In short, the new soft spaces are conceptualised as important platforms for economic development, policy integration, and policy delivery.

In chapter 9, I discuss the emergence of soft spaces in spatial planning further, and explore how policy agendas are being shaped in soft spaces. I explore how policy agendas promoted in soft spaces seek to influence formal planning arenas, and I discuss the potential implications of the emergence of soft spaces for strategic spatial planning.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND SUB-RESEARCH QUESTIONS

With a point of departure in the three themes outlined above, this section outlines a conceptual framework for making sense of contemporary transformations in strategic spatial planning in theory and practice, and presents sub-research questions to guide

the empirical research of how strategic spatial planning is changing in practice. The three sub-research questions form the point of departure for the empirical and conceptual discussions in chapter 7-9.

TRANSFORMING THE CORE IDEA OF PLANNING

The new strategic spatial planning sets out to transform the practice of strategic spatial planning from a regulatory activity to a vehicle for fostering economic development. In the discussion above, I have highlighted two transformations in the theorisations of strategic spatial planning, focusing on the procedure and substance of planning. In the new theorisations of strategic spatial planning, spatial strategies are envisioned as inspirational visions prepared through collaborative strategy-making processes, rather than topdown regulatory devices for growth management and land use planning. New spatial logics, promoting cities and regions as growth centres, are favoured at the expense of more regulatory and distributive spatial logics traditionally characterising European welfare states. Contemporary research on strategic spatial planning has predominantly been concerned with exploring to what extent planning episodes reflect the normative theorisations of strategic spatial planning in the literature. Limited attention has been paid to how continuities and transitions in thinking about planning shape episodes of strategic spatial planning. In this PhD project, I seek to explore how struggles between old and new ways of thinking about strategic spatial planning are played out in practice, and how the relationship between them is being negotiated in specific socio-political contexts. I seek to explore how contested transitions in planning rationalities and spatial logics shape contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning. The first sub-research question is:

Sub-research question 1: How are contested transformations of the core idea of planning manifested and handled in contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning?

RE-IMAGINING SPACE

The new strategic spatial planning promotes new ways of conceptualising and representing space and place. In the discussion above, I have highlighted how innovations in the use of spatial representations might play an important role in building support for spatial strategies. However, so far limited attention has been paid to how exactly relational spatial concepts and fuzzy spatial representations facilitate consensus. Is it the persuasive and impressionistic characteristics of

these representations that play a part in mobilising support? Or are their abstract characteristics the consequence of attempts to broker agreement or build consensus? In this PhD project, I seek to develop an understanding of how spatial representations are produced and used in strategic spatial planning episodes. I am interested in the work of relational geography in not only facilitating new ways of understanding and representing space, but in its assumed role of building consensus in strategic spatial planning processes. In particular, I am interested in to what the extent to the spatial politics of strategy-making travel into representations of space and influence how space is being represented, and what this means for how episodes of spatial strategy-making evolve. In short, I seek to explore how relational approaches to space capture, reflect, or contribute to the situated power relations in planning. The second sub-research question is:

Sub-research question II: *How is space being re-imagined in the interplay between the spatial politics of new governance landscapes and innovations in the use of spatial representations in contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning?*

CHANGING SCALES AND FORMS OF GOVERNANCE

The new strategic spatial planning promotes new scales and new forms of governance. In the discussion above, I have highlighted how new soft spaces are emerging in-between formal scales of planning. These soft spaces have been conceptualised as new processes of filling in, providing the glue that binds formal scales of planning together. They are characterised by attempts to short-circuit formal planning requirements and move beyond the rigidities of statutory planning in order to facilitate development. Here, there seems to be a risk that soft spaces are used to promote neoliberal policy agendas concerned with economic development at the expense of wider planning responsibilities. In what ways are soft spaces used to influence formal planning arenas? What might the implications of soft spaces be for strategic spatial planning? So far only limited attention has been paid to which policy agendas are being promoted in soft spaces, and how these agendas seek to influence formal planning arenas. In this PhD project, I seek to explore how policy agendas are being shaped in soft spaces, and how soft spaces are used to influence formal planning arenas. The third and last sub-research research is:

Sub-research question III: In soft spaces, how are policy agendas being shaped, and how does policy-making seek to influence formal planning arenas?

Figure 2.2 illustrates a conceptual framework for making sense of transformation in strategic spatial planning in theory and practice. The framework integrates figure 2.1 with the three themes and sub-research questions outlined above. The framework draws into attention how transformations in strategic spatial planning in theory and practice are shaped by wider societal changes and particular socio-political contexts, and how these transformations can be explored through the three themes highlighted in the figure. This framework will guide the empirical research and the subsequent theoretical discussions in this PhD thesis.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have developed a critical perspective on strategic spatial planning, which sets out to examine contemporary theorisations of strategic spatial planning in the literature with a point of departure in empirical research of how strategic spatial planning is carried out in practice. I argue that such an approach is helpful for stimulating critical reflection on both the nature of the changes in strategic spatial planning in practice and how these changes are being theorised in the planning literature.

To support the empirical research in the PhD project, I have developed a conceptual framework for making sense of contemporary transformations in strategic spatial planning in theory and practice. First, I have outlined how the revival of strategic spatial planning in Europe in the beginning of the 1990s should be understood as responses to wider societal changes and particular socio-political contexts. I have argued that it is the dynamics between these external and internal driving forces that shape the context of contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning. Second, I have described three themes which characterise contemporary transformations in strategic spatial planning in theory and practice. I have outlined how the core idea of planning is being transformed from regulatory growth management to a vehicle for economic growth. I have described how new relational understandings of spatiality have travelled into planning practice, encouraging new ways of imagining and representing space. And I have discussed how the new strategic spatial planning promotes new scales and new forms of governance characterised by increasing

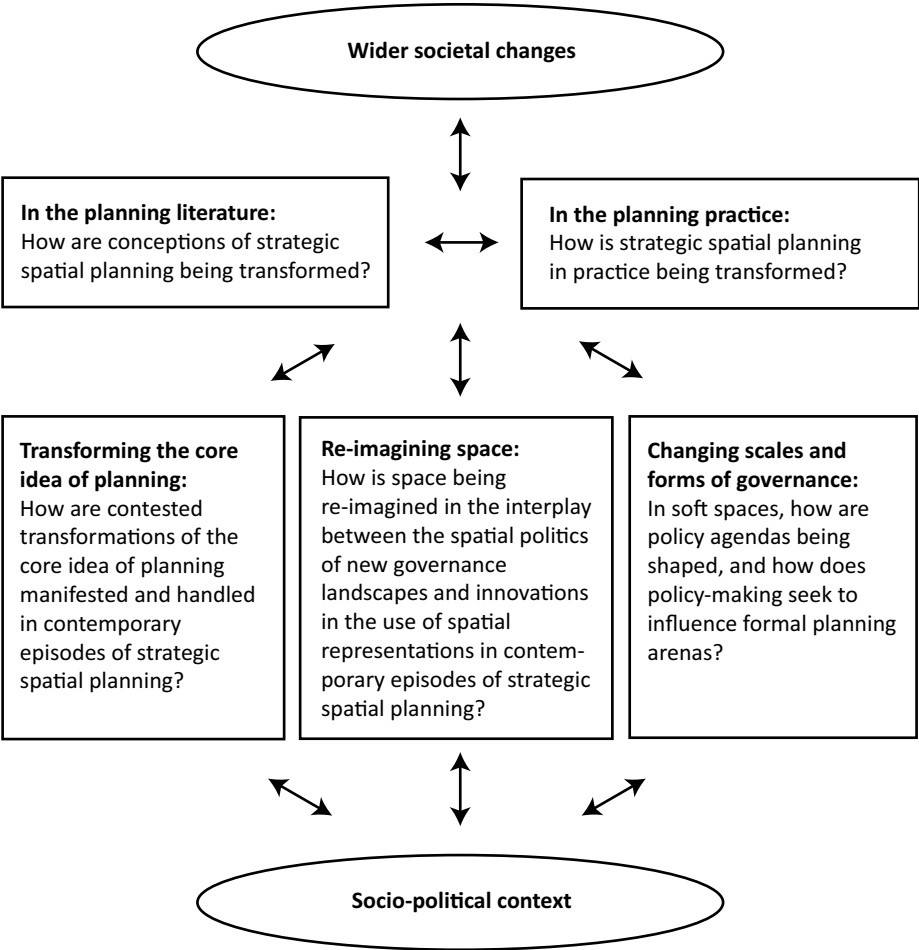


Figure 2.2: Conceptual framework for making sense of contemporary transformations in strategic spatial planning in theory and practice.

informality and fluidity, also referred to as soft spaces in the planning literature.

These three themes constitute the main parts of the conceptual framework for making sense of contemporary transformations in strategic spatial planning in theory and practice outlined in this chapter. The three themes and the sub-research questions formulated within them will guide the empirical research into strategic spatial planning in Denmark, presented in chapter 4-6, and structure the discussions of the empirical findings and theoretical implications in chapter 7-9.

NOTES

- 1 Examples include the Flemish Diamond (Albrechts, 1998, 2001), Hanover City Region (Albrechts et al., 2003), the Milan City Region (Balducci, 2003; Healey, 2007), the ESDP (CSD, 1999; Faludi & Waterhout, 2002), the Randstad (Lambrechts & Zonneveld, 2004), the Rhine-Ruhr Metropolitan Region (Knapp et al., 2004; van Houtum & Lagendijk, 2001), and more recently the devolved nations of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and the English regions (Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Harris & Hooper, 2004; Haughton et al., 2010).
- 2 See Albrechts (1998, 2001, 2006), Albrechts et al. (2001), Albrechts et al. (2003), Balducci (2003), Balducci et al. (2011), Healey et al. (1997), Healey (2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2008), Kunzmann (1996, 2001), Sartorio (2005), and Salet & Faludi (2000).
- 3 See for example Alexander (2010), Bengs (2005), Friedmann (1998, 2003), Gunder (2010), Huxley & Yiftachel (2000), Needham (2000), and Sager (2005).
- 4 I will return this issue in chapter 3, when I discuss the case study design and research approach of this PhD project.
- 5 The driving forces listed in figure 2.1 are not exhaustive. The figure includes merely the most commonly discussed driving forces in the planning literature, drawing mainly on Albrechts et al. (2003) and Healey et al. (1997).
- 6 See for example Dühr (2004, 2007), Jensen & Richardson (2001, 2003, 2004), Neuman (1996), and Zonneveld (2000).
- 7 See for example Davoudi & Strange (2009) and Healey (2004, 2006b, 2007).
- 8 See Allmendinger & Haughton (2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2010), Haughton et al. (2010), and Metzger (2011).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCHING STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING IN PRACTICE

This chapter presents the main methodological considerations of the PhD research. The chapter outlines the main research design and research strategy, and it discusses how the research was carried out, including data collection, data analysis, and how the research has been communicated in this PhD thesis. The chapter presents also reflections on the role of the researcher and research ethics. In developing my case study design and research strategy, I have benefitted from attending a PhD course on case study research in September 2009 organised by Aarhus School of Business.

INTRODUCTION

In chapter 2, I developed a critical perspective on strategic spatial planning as a conceptual framework for analysing how strategic spatial planning is taking place in practice. Whilst the previous chapter focused on the conceptual challenges of how to make sense of practice, this chapter is concerned with the methodological challenges of conducting research into these issues. In this chapter, I present the main methodological considerations behind the research and outline how the research was carried out.

In this PhD project, the aim is develop an understanding of how strategic spatial planning is taking place in practice and how the nature of planning practice might be changing. I am interested in how these changes take place in particular socio-political contexts, and how the unsettled nature of the context in turn constrains and supports transformations in strategic spatial planning. In this way, the phenomenon being studied becomes closely entangled with the research context. It becomes difficult to dissociate transformations in the nature of strategic spatial planning from changes in the socio-political context. In cases where the boundaries between the phenomenon and research context are not clearly evident, it is argued that the case study is a particularly useful research approach, as it investigates a contemporary

phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2003). This makes the case study a particularly relevant research approach not only to this PhD research, but to research within the field of planning more generally, as planning practices always should be understood within the particular context in which they are embedded.

The literature on case study research distinguishes generally between two ways of designing case studies, which represent two extreme end points in a continuum of case study design. At one end, the case study sets out to test clearly formulated hypotheses, typically developed from a literature review. Yin (2003) highlights the importance of a well-structured case study design in which propositions and units of analysis are laid out before empirical evidence is 'gathered'. The other end of the continuum takes a grounded theory approach to case studies. Here, the aim is to construct theory from empirical research, rather than theory testing. Whilst the theory testing approach highlights how formulation of hypotheses are needed to structure the case study, the grounded theory approach stresses that too strong a focus on theory early in the research process might restrict the research and prevent new perspectives from emerging (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Another important distinction is that the grounded theory approach understands empirical evidence as socially constructed by the researcher, rather than being 'gathered' in some kind of objective manner as the theory testing approach tends to assume. This brings into attention the role of the researcher in case study research, an issue I will return to later in this chapter.

In this PhD research, I am interested in developing an understanding of how strategic spatial planning is taking place in practice. The conceptual framework presented in chapter 2 is informed by both theory and empirical research and has been developed continuously throughout the PhD process. In this PhD project, I am not only interested in 'testing' to what extent the new theorisations of strategic spatial planning correspond to planning practice. The critical approach developed in chapter 2 seeks to critique contemporary theorisations of strategic spatial planning with a point of departure in empirical research of strategic spatial planning in practice. The aim is, here, to develop a more informed theoretical perspective on the nature of the changes in strategic spatial planning in both theory and practice. In this way, the case study design combines aspects of both theory testing and grounded theory case study approaches. In the rest of this chapter, I outline this particular case study approach.

The remainder of the chapter is structured as follows. First, I outline the research design and research strategy. I discuss how and when the fieldwork was carried out

and place this discussion in the context of the planning episodes researched. Second, I describe in greater detail how the interviews were carried out. Third, I discuss how the data was analysed using *NVivo* software. Fourth, I outline the special considerations paid to how to communicate the research in this PhD thesis. Finally, I discuss the role of the researcher and research ethics, before presenting overall reflections on the research approach.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH STRATEGY

The aim of the research has been to analyse the nature of the changes in Danish strategic spatial planning at a time that seems to be characterised by increasing experimentation with new forms of strategic spatial planning at subnational scales. The 2006 national planning report sets out to rethink strategic spatial planning in Denmark by among other things articulating a need for new experiments with strategic spatial planning at the scale of urban regions. Three planning episodes have been initiated which in different ways seem to represent innovations in how strategic spatial planning has been carried out in Denmark. These planning episodes are: I) the process of preparing a national planning directive for the Greater Copenhagen Area, II) the process of preparing an overall spatial framework for the Eastern Jutland urban region, and III) the process of preparing an overall spatial framework for Zealand beyond the Greater Copenhagen Area. It was believed that the planning episodes would offer a solid empirical foundation for a case study of how strategic spatial planning in Denmark is being reinvented in practice in the period after the 2006 national planning report. The case study of strategic spatial planning in Denmark has therefore been designed as an embedded case study (Scholz & Tietje, 2002; Yin, 2003), in which the case study of strategic spatial planning in Denmark would be informed by three sub-case studies of planning episodes of strategic spatial planning at subnational scales. It was hoped that empirical research of the three planning episodes would provide valuable insight into the nature of the changes in Danish strategic spatial planning in the period after the 2006 national planning report.¹

The aim of the research in this PhD project has been to develop an understanding of the nature of the changes in strategic spatial planning in Denmark at a particular time, based on three specific planning episodes at subnational scales. It has been a conscious decision to focus the empirical research on episodes of strategic spatial planning in Denmark only, in order to develop an understanding of how changes in the

Theme	Questions
Scale of strategy-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is there a need for spatial planning at this scale?
Motives and driving forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the aim of the planning process? • How and when was the aim of the process defined?
Form of governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the process organised? • Which roles do the different actors have in the process?
Process output	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the intentions behind the output(s) produced?
Legitimacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was it difficult to reach agreement on the content of the strategy? • How do you secure legitimacy for the process?
Leverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you make sure that the core ideas in the strategy are transferred into municipal/regional/state planning? • Has it been useful to be part of the process?
Interpretation of spatiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has the map been produced?
Changing planning practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are initiatives to spatial strategy-making across municipal boundaries a new trend in Danish spatial planning? • How do the changes in the Ministry of the Environment and the political climate affect which planning approaches are prioritised over others?

Table 3.1: The interview guide divided into eight themes

socio-political context influence planning practices. Rather than doing a comparison study of contemporary experiments with strategic spatial planning across Europe, I have taken strategic spatial planning experiences from other places, described in the planning literature, into account in the conceptual work in chapter 2 and the discussions of the empirical findings and theoretical implications in chapter 7-9. In this way, I have been able place my findings in a broader context of European strategic spatial planning, and use my findings of transformations in Danish strategic spatial planning as a point of departure for critical discussion on contemporary theorisations of strategic spatial planning.

The case study of strategic spatial planning in Denmark has been informed by document analysis of the 2006 national planning report, together with visions, strategies, background analyses, notes and other written material produced in the three planning episodes at subnational scales. The document analysis has been supplemented by interviews with national, regional and municipal planners involved in the preparation of the 2006 national planning report, involved in the three planning episodes, or otherwise knowledgeable about strategic spatial planning in Denmark. Furthermore, I have used analysis of policy maps in national planning reports and spatial strategies at subnational scales to examine the interpretations of spatiality underpinning spatial representations in Danish strategic spatial planning.²

An initial understanding of the three planning episodes was developed from document analysis of available online material published at the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning's homepage, which continuously was updated as the processes evolved.³ This material included notes, background analyses, presentations, and eventually spatial strategies. Based on this initial understanding and a review of the strategic spatial planning literature, I structured my research into eight research themes.⁴ Based on these eight research themes an interview guide was prepared, see table 3.1. The interview guide remained largely the same throughout the fieldwork period with only minor adjustments. However, emphasis was put on different themes in each interview according to who was being interviewed, reflecting the interview style discussed later in this chapter. From these eight initial research themes, three major lines of inquiry emerged, which came to structure the discussion of the empirical findings and theoretical implications, and essentially the communication of the research in this PhD thesis. Within each of these three themes, sub-research questions were formulated and sub-themes were identified. Table 3.2 illustrates the connection between the three main themes running through this PhD thesis, sub-research questions, research methods, and the initial eight research themes.

Main themes	Research question	Literature review	Data required	Research method	Initial research themes
Transforming the core idea of planning	How are contested transformations of the core idea of planning manifested and handled in contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning?	How have the planning rationalities underpinning strategic spatial planning changed since the mid-20 th century according to the planning literature?	Information about changes in planning rationalities and spatial logics in Danish strategic spatial planning over time	<u>Historical document analysis</u> of Danish national planning reports, exploring how planning rationalities and spatial logics have changed over time.	Motives and driving forces
<u>Sub-themes:</u> Planning rationalities Spatial logics		How have the core spatial logics in strategic spatial planning changed since the mid-20 th century according to the planning literature?	Information about planning rationalities and spatial logics underpinning contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning	<u>Document analysis</u> of the 2006 national planning report, together with strategies (and other documents) prepared in the planning episode, exploring the main aim behind the planning episode. <u>Interviews</u> with key actors in the planning episode, exploring I) the main aim of the planning episode, II) how and when the aim of the process was defined, III) what the intentions behind the output(s) produced are, IV) whether initiatives to spatial strategy-making across municipal boundaries seem to be a new trend in Danish spatial planning, and V) how the changes in the Ministry of the Environment and the political climate seem to affect the priority of planning approaches.	Process output Changing planning practice

Table 3.2: Overview over how each sub-research question methodologically was approached in the research.

Main themes	Research question	Literature review	Data required	Research method	Initial research themes
<p>Re-imagining space</p> <p><u>Sub-themes:</u></p> <p>Relational geography</p> <p>Spatial politics</p>	<p>How is space being re-imagined in the interplay between the spatial politics of new governance landscapes and innovations in the use of spatial representations in contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning?</p>	<p>What are the key characteristics of Euclidean and relational geography according to the literature?</p> <p>How has previous research investigated spatial politics in spatial representations?</p>	<p>Information about the interpretations of spatiality underpinning contemporary spatial representations in Danish strategic spatial planning</p> <p>Information about how spatial representations in contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning are produced</p>	<p><u>Analysis of maps</u> in national planning reports and spatial strategies prepared in the planning episode, exploring the interpretations of spatiality underpinning the map, and what makes the map Euclidean and/or relational.</p> <p><u>Interviews</u> with key actors in the planning episode, exploring I) how the map was produced, II) which considerations lay behind its production, III) whether it was difficult to reach agreement on the content of the spatial strategy, and IV) how the legitimacy for the process will be secured.</p>	<p>Interpretations of spatiality</p> <p>Legitimacy</p>

Table 3.2: Continued

Main themes	Research question	Literature review	Data required	Research method	Initial research themes
<p>Changing scales and forms of governance</p> <p><u>Sub-themes:</u></p> <p>Soft space</p> <p>Agenda-setting</p>	<p>In soft spaces, how are policy agendas being shaped, and how does policy-making seek to influence formal planning arenas?</p>	<p>What is a soft space according to the literature?</p> <p>Which policy agendas tend to be prioritised in informal strategic spatial planning processes according to the literature?</p>	<p>Exploration of to what extent we can understand contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning as soft spaces</p> <p>Information about which policy agendas are being prioritised in contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning</p> <p>Information about the links between policy-making in soft spaces and formal planning arenas</p>	<p><u>Document analysis</u> of the 2006 national planning report, exploring the main rationalities behind the new soft spaces in Danish spatial planning.</p> <p><u>Interviews</u> with key actors in the planning episode, exploring I) why there is a need for spatial planning at this new scale, II) how the planning episode is organised, III) which role the different actors in the planning episode have, and IV) how you make sure that the policy agendas in the soft spaces are transferred into formal planning arenas.</p>	<p>Scale of strategy-making</p> <p>Forms of governance</p> <p>Leverage</p>

Table 3.2: Continued

Initially, the aim was to develop a detailed understanding of the three planning episodes. This was quite challenging as two of the planning episodes were being implemented during the research process. This meant that I was trying to develop an understanding of the processes as they went along. These sub-case studies evolved as a continuous analysis of the processes as they played out, compared to the planning episode that had already ended before the PhD process. Conversely, in the completed planning episode, it was difficult to develop the same detailed understanding of how the planning episode had evolved, as these details were not so fresh in the interviewees' minds. Here then, the interviews centred on the interviewees' reflections on how the process had evolved in interplay with the socio-political context. In this sense, the methodological foundation for one of the sub-case studies differs slightly from the two others.

The interviews were carried out in three rounds. In the first round, pilot interviews were carried out with five current and former planners from the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning in November 2009. The ministry planners were selected according to their involvement in the 2006 national planning report or in one of the three planning episodes at subnational scales.⁵ The interviews sought to build towards an understanding of the three planning episodes together with the socio-political context in which they had emerged and were being implemented. Unintentionally, the interviews took place shortly after the Ministry of the Environment's draft for a new national planning report had been widely criticised by an anonymous municipal planner in a letter to the editor in the Danish planning journal *Byplan* (Jensen, 2009). Changes in Danish strategic spatial planning were therefore an issue, which preoccupied Danish planners at the time, which clearly shined through several of the interviews, and alerted my attention to the changing socio-political context in which the new experiments of strategic spatial planning were taking place. Here, it became evident that the changes in the socio-political context running alongside the planning episodes in different ways were influencing how new strategic planning ideas were being implemented in practice. The new strategic spatial planning episodes could not be understood without paying critical attention to the significant changes in the socio-political contexts, in which the planning episodes initially were thought, and in which they subsequently were being implemented. It became evident that the three planning episodes should not only be understood as separate planning experiments carried out in specific local socio-political contexts. Instead, the three planning episodes should be understood as part of a greater picture of how strategic spatial planning was being transformed after the 2006 national planning report, as

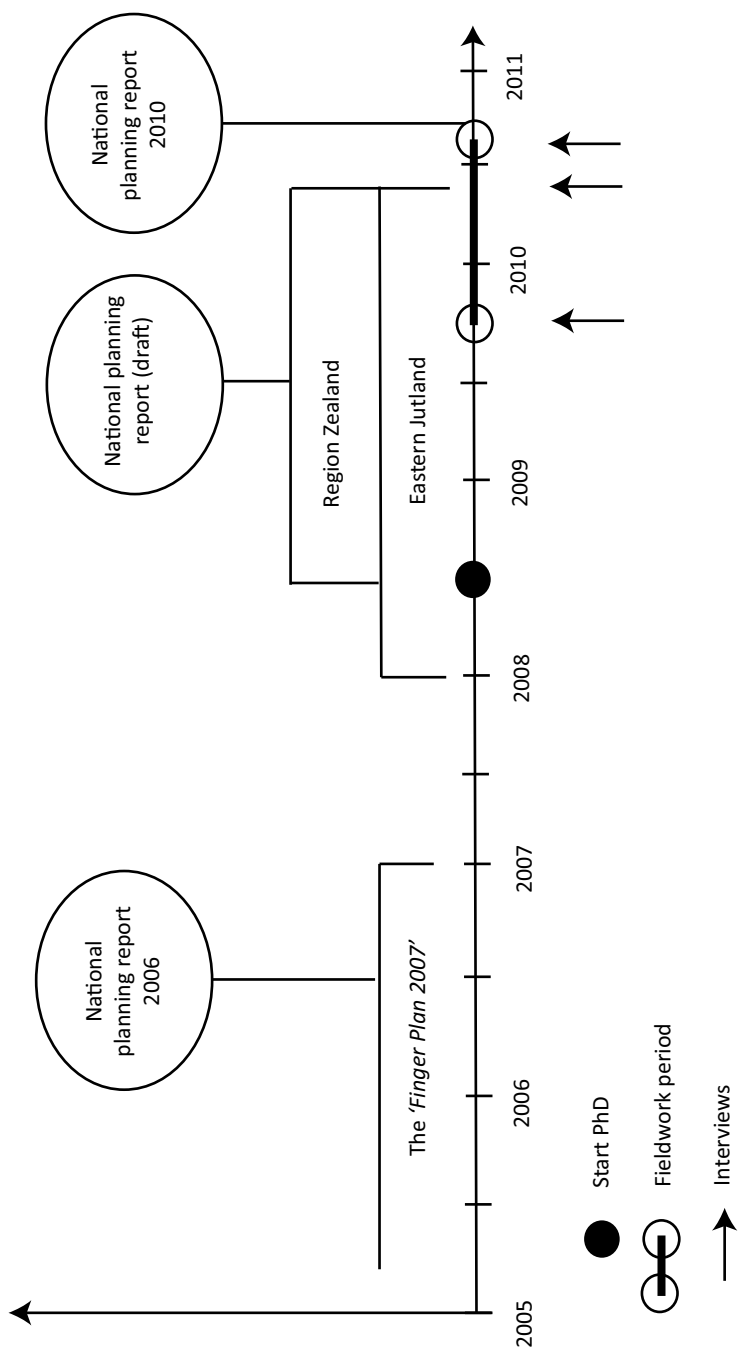


Figure 3.1: Time line indicating the fieldwork period and interview rounds in connection to the three planning episodes researched and the publication of national planning reports

a consequence of wider socio-political changes. It is the nature of the changes in the greater picture of strategic spatial planning and their implications for particular planning episodes that has grown into attention throughout the PhD study.

The second interview round was carried out in April and May 2010. Here, the aim was to develop a detailed understanding of the planning episodes in the Greater Copenhagen Area and Region Zealand. The partners in the Zealand planning episodes had published a draft for a spatial strategy in the end of March 2010, which formed a point of departure for the interviews in Region Zealand. The interviews were mainly carried out with members of the coordination group in the process, involving three municipal planners, a regional planner, and a planner from the Danish Transport Authority (see chapter 6).

In the sub-case of the Greater Copenhagen Area an initial (focus) group interview was carried out with four municipal planners from a municipality in the Greater Copenhagen Area. The initial aim of the interview was to develop an understanding of the '*Finger Plan 2007*' process seen from a municipality's perspective, together with current pressing planning matters in the Greater Copenhagen Area, such as the City Circle Project involving 10 municipalities in the Greater Copenhagen Area (see chapter 4). The interview was originally intended as a single interview, but was turned into a group interview as several planners in the municipality were interested in joining the interview. It turned out that the one planner had previously worked in the Ministry of the Environment, another planner had worked at Local Government Denmark, the third planner had over 20 years of experience of working with municipal planning in that particular municipality, whilst the fourth planner was the project manager for the City Circle Project. In this way, the interview was able to capture various dimensions of the changing nature of planning in and beyond the Greater Copenhagen Area, and sparked reflections on the implications of the changing socio-political context seen from different perspectives. In the Greater Copenhagen Area, further two interviews were carried out with municipal planners. One of the interviewees was a former planner in the Greater Copenhagen Authority and could therefore offer valuable insights into the transition period of changing planning responsibilities in the Greater Copenhagen Area.

The third and final interview round was carried out in Eastern Jutland in August 2010. The interviews took a point of departure in the recommendations for urban development and transport planning prepared by the partners in the Eastern Jutland process in June 2010. Here, interviews were carried out with four municipal planners, part of the coordination group in the process (see chapter 5). The same four planners

had been interviewed in the initial phase of the Eastern Jutland planning episode in the spring 2008 as part of my master's thesis (Olesen, 2008). The interviews sought therefore to expand my understanding of the planning episode, in particular in terms of how the process had evolved in the latter stages.

A timeline of the fieldwork period and the three interview rounds in connection to the time span of the three planning episodes is illustrated in figure 3.1. The figure marks also the publication of national planning reports, which spatial policies are significant indicators of the changing socio-political context.

DOING INTERVIEWS

The interviews were all based on an interview guide with a pre-formulated set of questions, reflecting the semi-structured interview tradition (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The interview guide was used as a checklist of themes to be covered in the interviews, rather than a set of questions to be asked exactly as phrased in the guide. A poster explaining the research topic and the main aims of the research had together with the interview guide (see appendix) been sent to the interviewees before the interview. Sometimes the interviewees had seen this as an opportunity to prepare themselves before the interview. Some had printed out the interview guide and made small notes to my questions. Others had brought documents of various kinds to the interview which could enlighten me on the particular planning episode. All interviews were carried out at the interviewees' workplace and lasted around 1½ hours. They were all carried out in Danish, recorded and subsequently fully transcribed. In total 22 persons were interviewed (see appendix).

The interviews began in a rather explorative manner. First, the research topic was introduced, using the poster to illustrate the key empirical and theoretical parts of the research. This brief introduction setting out the problem frame often sparked immediate response from the interviewees and kicked off the interviews without any questions being asked, reflecting the explorative interview approach (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Second, the interviewees were asked to give an account of the main events in the planning episode in which he or she was involved. The narratives of how the particular planning episode had evolved often touched upon several themes in the interview guide, which was returned to later in the interview. The interviewees were encouraged to give their account of the events in the planning episode with as few interruptions from the interviewer as possible.

In the third phase of the interview, I returned to the eight themes in the interview guide making sure that these to some extent had been covered. Rather than paying equal attention to all eight themes, I paid specific attention to the themes where the interviewees seemed to have specific knowledge or strong opinions. I encouraged the interviewees to tell me what they thought was important for me to know about the particular planning episode, rather than being preoccupied with making sure that all eight themes in the interview guide were covered extensively. Recording the interviews allowed me to focus my attention on understanding the interviewees and what they were explaining without having to worry about the subsequent analysis. In this way, I tried to separate the practice of understanding from the practice of interpretation, as prescribed in the phenomenological research tradition. In order to further discussions on how the spatial representations in the spatial strategies had been produced and whether they had been subject of contestation, copies of the spatial representations were brought to the interviews. Often questions like 'tell me about how you made this map' inspired the interviewees to tell narratives about how the spatial politics of strategy-making in various ways had influenced the spatial representation, and how specific considerations had been paid to its production. These stories were told with constantly referencing to the map in which the interviewee was able to identify geographical areas or forms of representation around which struggles had evolved.

In the fourth and final phase of the interview, focus shifted towards the implications of the socio-political context and the nature of strategic spatial planning in the future. Here, I often had to play a more active role in the interview by asking more leading questions or setting up hypothesis, which the interviewees could subscribe to or reject, e.g. 'are we moving towards more cross-municipal planning in Denmark?' or 'how did the changes in the political climate in the Ministry of the Environment affect the process?' This phase of the interview provided a platform for me to test my emerging hypothesis and initial conclusions about the nature of the changes in Danish strategic spatial planning.

ANALYSING INTERVIEW DATA

The interview transcripts were all coded and analysed using the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) *NVivo*. The use of CAQDAS has become more widespread in the social sciences to support grounded theory research

approaches, but can be used to support other research approaches as well (Bringer et al., 2004). In particular, CAQDAS is helpful for handling large qualitative datasets, replacing traditional cut-and-paste techniques with endless text documents by a single interface in which all data can be coded and analysed. In this way, CAQDAS should be understood as a mechanisation of cut-and-paste techniques (Kelle et al., 1995), rather than new ways of analysing qualitative datasets, although software like *NVivo* gradually has become more advanced, offering various analysis tools. Here, it is important to stress that the application of CAQDAS only facilitates interpretation of qualitative data. As Weitzman & Miles (1995, p.3, referred in Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) point out “computers don’t analyse data; people do.” The process of coding and structuring of qualitative data into categories plays an active role in shaping qualitative data (Richards, 1999). The literature on the use of CAQDAS stresses therefore the importance of transparency in how CAQDAS is used to support data analysis and theory development in academic research (Bringer et al., 2004).

In this PhD research, *NVivo* was introduced into the research process relatively late and was therefore only used at a particular stage in the project to assist coding and analysis of data. The software had no influence on the research design or on how the interview guides were generated. The initial coding was structured according to the eight themes in the interview guide using a concept driven coding approach and tree coding technique (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Richards, 1999). This technique proved to be too restraining to capture the diversity of the many issues covered in the interviews. Furthermore, as I primarily wanted the coding to support the writing of the empirical chapters, I restructured the coding according to the three sub-case studies, creating a fourth category containing evidence of strategic spatial planning at the national level, and a fifth category capturing the general discussions of the changes in Danish strategic spatial planning. This coding was done using a data driven coding approach and free coding technique (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Richards, 1999), allowing the nodes to emerge from the interviews *in vivo* rather than being predefined, reflecting a grounded theory research approach. The free nodes were during the coding processes continuously grouped and reorganised into sub-categories that I felt served justice to the complexity of each planning episode. Although, each planning episode was coded differently, I still had the eight themes in mind as an overall structure. In this way the coding procedure became an integrated part of data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

COMMUNICATING RESEARCH

In the planning literature, increasing attention has been paid to the use of narratives, both in terms of applying narratology in detailed case study accounts (Flyvbjerg, 1998) and in understanding planning as an exercise in persuasive storytelling (Throgmorton, 1996, 2003). Narratology has been highlighted as a particularly useful way of generalising from single case studies through the power of the good example (Flyvbjerg, 1991), as narratology brings out opportunities “for seeing the universal in the particular, the world in a grain of sand” (Sandercock, 2003, p.13). In this PhD thesis, I have used narratology to bring out a particular story in each planning episode which supports the overall narrative running through the thesis about the nature of the changes in Danish strategic spatial planning. In this way, the narratives told about each sub-case study supports the overall case study of Danish strategic spatial planning, reflecting the embedded case study design.

The first draft of the empirical chapters was structured according to the eight themes. The chapters contained long descriptions within each theme trying to capture as many details and interview statements as possible. In the redrafting of the chapters, I decided to break away from the predefined structure in order, partly, to serve justice to the complexity of each planning episode, and partly, to bring out a particular narrative from each planning episode, supporting the main arguments of the PhD thesis. Through the use of narratology, I sought not only to emphasise my own role in communicating the research, I also wished to make explicit that each case study account is fabricated, no matter how it is being structured. As Throgmorton (2003, p.126) notes “the content of a story depends on one’s purpose in telling it.”

THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER AND RESEARCH ETHICS

I have now several times indicated the important role of the researcher in this PhD research in terms of data production and research communication. Rather than trying to reduce the role of the researcher in the research, I have early in the process accepted that I inevitable will play an important role, not only in the research, but in the PhD study process in general. For me the PhD study process is about learning how to become a researcher and about developing a certain knowledge or expertise within the field being studied, which allows you to make a contribution to knowledge in the field being studied. Flyvbjerg (1991) argues that the researcher’s own learning process plays an important part of the case study. Through the case study, the researcher

acquires context dependent knowledge, *phronesis*, which is important for developing research skills at the highest level (Flyvbjerg, 1991). The most advanced form of understanding of the situation or phenomenon of investigation takes place through placing the researcher in the centre of the object of study (Flyvbjerg, 1991). Only by putting ourselves (as researchers) in the centre of our research, can we understand our own biases, and only when we understand ourselves, can we begin to understand and make sense of others' lives and actions (Maaløe, 2002). It is therefore important to clarify my own normative position and embedded biases in this section.

My research interest in strategic spatial planning started during my master's thesis, where I was researching the first phase of the planning episode in Eastern Jutland (Olesen, 2008). One of the conclusions from this study was that Danish strategic spatial planning was changing and in some kind of transition period. I understood that something important was going on that needed further research, and that I had the prerequisites to make a contribution here. I began the PhD process with a strong sympathy for strategic spatial planning ideas, as developed by Healey, Albrechts and others in the planning literature. Gradually, I became dissatisfied with these theorisations, as they only seemed to cover part of the story of what was going on in practice. I therefore had to develop another way of making sense of practice, which allowed me to critically examine how strategic spatial planning was carried out in practice. In particular, I needed a conceptual framework that allowed me to analyse the nature of the changes in Danish strategic spatial planning in the context of socio-political changes. This turned into the critical perspective on strategic spatial planning outlined in chapter 2. In this way, I developed an approach that is not antagonistic towards strategic spatial planning *per se*, but critical towards how strategic spatial planning ideas are translated into planning practice and critical towards the lack of attention in the planning literature to this issue.

This critical perspective on strategic spatial planning has influenced how the research is communicated in this PhD thesis. The accounts of the three sub-case studies presented in chapter 4-6 represents my understanding of these planning episodes synthesised from the analysis of documents and interviews. The narratives set out to tell a particular story about each planning episode, foregrounding some empirical evidence, whilst backgrounding other. Researchers with other research agendas or the planners interviewed might want to tell the narratives differently, emphasising different events or themes. In this PhD thesis, the narratives of the three planning episodes are told in a way that relates to the main lines of inquiry running through the thesis, thereby supporting the overall conclusions.

This naturally raises ethical issues about how, for example, particular interview quotations are used to support a particular storyline. All interviewees have had the opportunity to see and comment on how quotations have been used and how the interviews are referenced in the papers and the thesis. This was also important, as the quotations were translated into English. Mostly the interviewees were happy with my translation of what they had said, and only a few times interviewees' responses involved some negotiation of how a quotation should be phrased. On a few occasions, I accepted to leave out a sentence in a quotation, as it was interpreted as being too sensitive by the interviewees and not decisive for my argument in the thesis.

Whilst the interviewing of how the three planning episodes had evolved was rather unproblematic, the discussions on the potential implications of the changing socio-political context for the planning episodes and Danish strategic spatial planning in general was more sensitive. Often the interviewees stressed that they were saying things off the record, or were giving their personal account which did not necessarily match the official position of the organisation they were representing. At other times, I did not get the interviewees' personal attitude towards some of the issues we had been discussing, until I was on my way out of the door and the recorder switched off. Immediately after the interviews, I tried to capture these comments together with general reflections on the interviews in my notebook. In this way, things said off the record or in-between the lines have helped to shape my understanding of what was going on and the issues at stake in contemporary transformations of strategic spatial planning.

My initial intention was to get as close as possible to the two ongoing planning episodes during my research. As I gradually developed my critical perspective on strategic spatial planning, I decided to keep distance to the processes and gain the insights I needed through interviews and through documents available online at the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning's homepage. I was concerned that by getting too close to the processes I might 'go native' and not be able to maintain a sufficiently critical perspective. In maintaining a critical distance to the research field, I benefitted from a research visit at Cardiff University immediately after my fieldwork period. The new context and the geographical distance helped me to think in fresh ways about the dataset and develop new perspectives on it.

REFLECTIONS

In this chapter, I have outlined the main methodological considerations of the PhD research. I have highlighted how a case study research approach is particularly useful for exploring the nature of the changes in strategic spatial planning in Denmark, and how these changes are shaped by the socio-political context within which they are embedded. The case study of strategic spatial planning in Denmark have been designed as an embedded case study, informed by three sub-case studies of episodes of strategic spatial planning at subnational scales in Denmark. The research approach has been rather explorative in the sense that research themes and issues initially were allowed to emerge from the empirical research and literature review. As part of this process, the initial eight research themes were shaped up and reformulated into three main themes, supported by sub-research questions.

Key events in the planning episodes, such as publication of spatial strategies, dictated when interviews would be carried out. Here, the main aim was to learn about how strategic spatial planning was carried out in practice. The interviews remained therefore as the research approach rather explorative with the sequence of themes discussed often being dictated by the interviewees. As a consequence, I learned much more about the planning episodes and strategic spatial planning in general, than I would have done by sticking to my interview guide. However, this also meant that not all eight themes were covered equally in the interviews. During the fieldwork period, I became more or less intentionally interested in some themes, as these seemed to be particularly useful for uncovering interesting stories about strategic spatial planning in practice. The interest in these themes was subsequently strengthened by further exploration of how these issues had been researched and theorised in the planning literature. The three themes around which this PhD thesis is structured emerged thus, partly, from the eight themes in the interview guide, partly, from the interviews, and partly from ongoing readings of the strategic spatial planning literature. However, they reflect perhaps more than anything the interests of the researcher built up during the research process. In this way, my own professional interests and not at least my own learning process have had a significant impact on the research process and the writing up of the PhD thesis.

NOTES

- 1 In chapter 7 and 8, I treat the three sub-case studies as separate planning episodes inspired by the same ambition of reinventing strategic spatial planning in Denmark, as proposed in the 2006 national planning report. In chapter 9, I break away from this structure and treat the planning episodes in the Greater Copenhagen Area and Zealand beyond the Greater Copenhagen Area as a case of an emerging soft space in Danish spatial planning. I discuss this issue further in chapter 9.
- 2 So far there have only been a few attempts to systematically analyse spatial representations in strategic spatial planning. In my analysis, I draw on previous work by Davoudi & Strange (2009), Dühr (2004, 2007) and Healey (2004, 2007). Here, I have not only been interested in what is represented on the map and which interpretation of spatiality the map represents, I have in particular been interested in how spatial politics influence how spatial representations are produced and what is being represented on them. I discuss the details of the analysis in chapter 8.
- 3 In my master's thesis, I had already analysed the first phase of the planning episode in the Eastern Jutland urban region (Olesen, 2008), which provided me with a good understanding of the issues at stake in this process.
- 4 These eight themes were I) scale of strategy-making, II) motives and driving forces, III) form of governance, IV) process output, V) legitimacy, VI) leverage, VII) interpretation of spatiality, and VIII) changing planning practice.
- 5 At the time, two of the interviewees were working in Plan09, an independent research and information body created to assist the municipalities in the process of preparing the municipal plans 2009. The body was a partnership between the Ministry of the Environment and Real Estate, and located in connection to the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning.

PART B

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: EPISODES OF STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING IN PRACTICE

STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING AS TOPDOWN REGULATION IN THE GREATER COPENHAGEN AREA

This chapter presents the first sub-case study of strategic spatial planning in Denmark. In 2007 the Ministry of the Environment published a national planning directive, entitled the 'Finger Plan 2007', to guide the future urban development in the Greater Copenhagen Area. The national planning directive marked the beginning of a new era with the Ministry of the Environment as main responsible for strategic spatial planning at the scale of the Greater Copenhagen Area.

INTRODUCTION

The Greater Copenhagen Area has a long and proud tradition of strategic spatial planning. The history of the 'Finger Plan' goes back to 1947 where the first proposal for a spatial plan for the Greater Copenhagen Area was launched as a private enterprise (Regional Planning Office, 1947). Even though the plan failed to get political support immediately after its publication (Jensen, 1991), the ideas behind the plan gained substantial professional support in the following years in the Regional Planning Secretariat in the 1960s and the Greater Copenhagen Council in the 1970s. The simple, unique, and easily understood graphical expression in the shape of the Greater Copenhagen Area resembling a hand with spread fingers, played a key role in building support and legitimacy for the plan (see plate 3). The spatial logic of the 'Finger Plan' was to locate urban growth within the fingers supported by a public transport system along the fingers. The land between the fingers was reserved as recreational green areas serving as the city's lungs. The overall intentions of the plan have been pursued until today, although the fingers have slowly grown thicker and longer than originally intended (Gaardmand, 1993). In 1996, the 'Finger Plan' was internationally recognised for its integration of land use and transport policy in the European Commission's report on sustainable cities (CEC, 1996).

Although the spatial logic of the hand has survived for more than 60 years, the spatial framework has been adjusted by the various regional bodies administrating

Box 4.1: The key characteristics of the Greater Copenhagen Area (Østergård, 2007)

The Greater Copenhagen Area consists of the inner urban area, surrounding suburbs and the five old market towns of Helsingør (35,000), Hillerød (29,000), Frederikssund (15,000), Roskilde (46,000), and Køge (34,500), each placed at the end of the urban corridors constituting the urban region's spatial structure. Approximately 1/3 of the urban region's 1.8 million inhabitants live in the inner urban area. The governance structure in the Greater Copenhagen Area is highly complex with 34 municipalities each responsible for spatial planning within their own district. Several attempts to develop a more efficient governance structure have been largely unsuccessful throughout the years, latest in 2007, as many municipalities refused to merge into larger units as in the rest of Denmark.

the 'Finger Plan' through time. The rapid urbanisation in the 1960s and early 1970s resulted in increasing concerns that the 'Finger Plan' would not be able to accommodate the expected growth. The regional plan from 1973 prepared by the first metropolitan body, the Greater Copenhagen Council, designated four regional centres in order to take the pressure of the central Copenhagen. The anticipated growth in the plan of 2 million inhabitants by year 2000 has still not been reached, and as a consequence only the regional centre in Høje Taastrup has been developed today. In 1989 the Greater Copenhagen Council produced its second regional plan, which broke with the growth oriented planning focus in the 1970s (Gaardmand, 1993). Focus was put on urban regeneration as a consequence of the changing economic structures in society. The plan saw the changes in the industrial sector as an opportunity to locate new workplaces in the service sector in close proximity to railway stations, and the key spatial logic in the '*Finger Plan 2007*' of the principle of station proximity was born. The 1989 regional plan became the Greater Copenhagen Council's final act. Inspired by the abolition of metropolitan councils under the neoliberal heydays in the 1980s in the UK, the Danish conservative government abolished the Greater Copenhagen Council in 1989 (Andersen et al., 2002) and divided the planning authority for the Greater Copenhagen Area between three counties.

In the 1990s, strategic spatial planning in the Greater Copenhagen Area was concerned with turning Copenhagen into a Nordic growth centre. The state played an active role in achieving this ambition by among others things building a bridge across Øresund, developing the new urban district of Ørestad on the island of Amager close to the international airport, and connecting Ørestad to the centre of Copenhagen with Denmark's first metro line. In other words, the aim was to develop the Øresund

Region, an old dream going back to the end of the 1950s (Gaardmand, 1993). The massive investments in Copenhagen should be seen in light of the previous two decades' national spatial policies promoting development elsewhere in the country, leaving Copenhagen on the edge of bankruptcy.

In 2000 another attempt was made to introduce metropolitan governance in the greater Copenhagen Area, this time in the shape of the Greater Copenhagen Authority. As the former metropolitan government, the Greater Copenhagen Authority was a rather weak regional body characterised by indirect political representation through the counties (Andersen et al., 2002). The body lasted only six years and was abolished as part of the structural reform after having prepared two regional plans in 2001 and 2005.

THE 'FINGER PLAN 2007' - A CHILD OF THE STRUCTURAL REFORM

As part of the structural reform in 2007, the Greater Copenhagen Authority's planning responsibilities were divided between the municipalities and the state. 2/3 of the planning responsibilities were transferred to the municipal level and subsequently written into the next generation of municipal plans prepared in 2009. The remaining 1/3 of the regional guidelines in Greater Copenhagen Authority's 2005 regional plan were rewritten into a national planning directive, entitled the '*Finger Plan 2007*' (Ministry of the Environment, 2007a). As a former head of planning in the Ministry of the Environment phrased it, the '*Finger Plan 2007*' should be understood as a "child of the structural reform" (Interview, NØ, 2009, author's translation), rather than a conscious attempt to reconfigure strategic spatial planning in the Greater Copenhagen Area.

The question of whether there was a need for strategic spatial planning at the scale of the Greater Copenhagen Area played a significant role in the political discussions on the structural reform, which primarily was concerned with rescaling of responsibilities for the public hospitals towards the new administrative regions. In the political agreement on the reform between the liberal and conservative coalition government and the Danish People's Party, it was specified how the overall spatial planning in the Greater Copenhagen Area was to be guided by the planning act (and statements of government's interests in the municipal planning) (Ministry of Interior and Health, 2004). The government introduced a bill, where the guidelines for the

overall spatial planning in the Greater Copenhagen Area only were stipulated in the planning act. Local Government Denmark found this model too rigid, and proposed instead a model in which only the overall guidelines were stipulated in the planning act, and these subsequently were to be specified by the Minister of the Environment in a national planning directive, which easier could be revised if the need arose. This combination of a planning act and national planning directive was also seen as a more planning-oriented model within the Ministry of the Environment, as revisions of the 'Finger Plan' would only require a planning process and the acceptance of the Minister of the Environment and not formal legislative procedure in the parliament (Interview, PHN, 2009). This model was written into the new planning act, which subsequently was passed by the parliament. The overall strategic spatial planning for the Greater Copenhagen Area consists thus of a set of overall planning guidelines stipulated in the planning act and a national planning directive, where the '*Finger Plan 2007*' is meant to be the first in the row.

The need for maintaining an overall spatial framework for the Greater Copenhagen Area should first and foremost be seen in the context of the unsuccessful merging of municipalities in the Greater Copenhagen Area in the structural reform. Today, 1/3 of all municipalities in Denmark are located within the Greater Copenhagen Area, many of which are among the smallest in Denmark in terms of size and population. Second, the path dependency of a strong tradition for strategic spatial planning at the regional scale seems to have paved the way for a national planning directive in the Greater Copenhagen Area, despite a liberal and conservative coalition government in power. In the '*Finger Plan 2007*', the Ministry of the Environment highlighted the legacy of the past and the need to preserve the 'family silver' by continuing 60 years planning tradition (Ministry of the Environment, 2007a).

Whilst the spatial logics behind the 'Finger Plan' largely have remained the same throughout the last 60 years, the discourses and rationalities surrounding the plan have changed significantly. The '*Finger Plan 2007*' repeats the language of the 2006 national planning report, arguing that an overall spatial framework plays an important role in promoting an international competitive city (Ministry of the Environment, 2007a). The spatial structure and the principle of station proximity are said to reduce congestion, support public transportation, preserve green recreational areas, and promote an attractive urban environment.

THE '*FINGER PLAN 2007*' PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process of the '*Finger Plan 2007*' was divided into four phases. In the first phase, the Ministry of the Environment invited the municipalities in the Greater Copenhagen Area to information meetings, where the ministry presented how it saw its new task of preparing a national planning directive. The municipalities were divided into eight groups, and meetings were held with each group. A former head of planning in the Ministry of the Environment explained how the ministry almost 'over-informed' the municipalities in the beginning in an attempt to prevent early resistance (Interview, NØ, 2009). In the second phase, a technical draft of the '*Finger Plan 2007*' was prepared and sent into public hearing after an internal clearance between the different ministries. This hearing process was mainly targeted municipal planning professionals. In the third phase, the technical draft was turned into a draft of the '*Finger Plan 2007*', which became part of the political discussions on the structural reform. This meant that the government and various ministries were involved in the process at this stage. All the issues and potential controversies between the different ministries were sorted out before the proposal was sent into the final public hearing. A ministry planner characterised this particular part of the process as very long and comprehensive, taking up the entire autumn of 2006.

"But well, it is a very comprehensive political process, such a plan. Well, there is no comma, there might be mistakes in the placing of commas, but there is no sentence or half a sentence which has not been discussed and which has not been looked at through magnifying glass. You sit day and night in such a process and answer questions from the other ministries. In such a process the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of the Interior play the devil's advocate and ask closely to what consequences there might be for this and that, and keep asking. [...] A lot of questions you cannot imagine. They really go at in with a close louse comb. It might be surprising to many that it is so dense." (Interview, PHN, 2009, author's translation)

In the fourth phase, the proposal for the '*Finger Plan 2007*' was sent into public hearing in the beginning of 2007, which involved another round of meetings with the municipalities, this time including both the Minister of the Environment and municipal mayors. After the hearing a note on the hearing statements was published (Ministry of the Environment, 2007b) together with the final draft of the '*Finger Plan 2007*'

(Ministry of the Environment, 2007a), which became effective from August 2007, and a strategic environmental assessment (Ministry of the Environment, 2007c).

AT THE JUNCTION BETWEEN STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING AND INFLEXIBLE PLANNING ADMINISTRATION

The Ministry of the Environment used its new planning responsibilities to strengthen strategic spatial planning in the Greater Copenhagen Area. The ministry believed that the Greater Copenhagen Authority in its 2005 regional plan had designated too many areas for urban development outside the 'Finger Plan' structure, not paying sufficiently attention to the principle of station proximity (Interview, PHN, 2009). A former planner in the Greater Copenhagen Authority explained how the 2005 regional plan sought to take of the pressure of the housing market in the Greater Copenhagen Area by increasing the number of designated housing areas (Interview, HB, 2010). Many of these housing areas were designated in the outer zone of the Greater Copenhagen Area (zone 4, see box 4.2) as single family housing to meet the requirements of the housing market.

"But it is also easier to designate new areas than densify the existing city, because that was the alternative. When a large proportion of the population wants to live in single family housing, then it was no alternative to densify in Copenhagen Municipality or in Glostrup, it is not an alternative. 50 pct. of us want to live in a single family house if we can afford it. Therefore I believe that you sometimes, if we take the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning's points of view, overall they might be right, also in terms of sustainability and especially in terms of transport and things like that, but if people in this country can decide which type of residence they prefer, then the majority would pick the single family house, if they can afford it. And then you also need areas for it." (Interview, HB, 2010, author's translation)

The Greater Copenhagen Authority was a rather weak political construction, consisting of county representatives mainly concerned with issues of relevance for their own election area (Interview, HB, 2010). As a consequence, the Greater Copenhagen Authority had very few spatial policies of its own and relied instead on a mix of county policies when these were conformable. The designation of areas for future urban

Box 4.2: The four zones in the spatial framework in the '*Finger Plan 2007*' (Ministry of the Environment, 2007a, pp.15-17)

- 1) The inner urban region (the palm of the hand): all future urban development as regeneration
- 2) The outer urban area (the fingers): municipalities can designate areas for future urban development within a 2 km wide belt on both sides of the railway.
- 3) The green wedges: no urban development or urban leisure facilities
- 4) The remaining urban region: only future urban development of local character in connection to municipal centres or as rounding-off of an existing urban community

development tended to be divided evenly between the bodies represented in the authority, often based on an area-by-area planning approach. The weak political construction also meant that the Greater Copenhagen Authority was more likely to 'close its eyes' or 'fiddle a bit' in order to promote particular development projects (Interview, PHN, 2009).

The Ministry of the Environment wanted to break with this practice by introducing a stricter and more strategic spatial framework (see box 4.2 and plate 3-4). As the responsibility for designating future urban development areas had been transferred to the municipalities as part of the structural reform, the Ministry of the Environment wanted to introduce a spatial framework primarily concerned with designation of areas for urban development of regional significance. The '*Finger Plan 2007*' stipulated how designation of these areas had to be in accordance to the overall spatial framework, whilst leaving the municipalities to designate areas for urban development of local character on their own. In this way, the Ministry of the Environment wanted to bring in the overall spatial structure of the urban region in the centre of the planning administration.

"The former regional plans designated urban areas area-by-area. They decided on one stamp after the other. We have tried to give the municipalities greater latitude in terms of deciding and weighing urban development interests against other interests, but we have an overall set of rules, which says, if it is of regional significance, well then it has follow the finger city structure. [...] So in that way it has become a bit more strategic, as you to a greater extent steer through some principles rather than specific designation of areas. And I believe it also contributes to a greater acceptance of the overall steering, because

there is so much focus on the city finger structure, while there in earlier regional plans were fights about single areas [...] It was like the overall principles lay in the background and all the fights took place around concrete areas.” (Interview, PHN, 2009, author’s translation)

Furthermore, two planning principles were given increased attention. First, the municipalities were asked to prioritise between areas designated for future urban development in the next planning period (12 years) by specifying the sequence through which these areas would be developed. These requirements were introduced by the ministry to control the total amount of areas designated for future urban development, especially in zone 4 which had previously benefitted from the Greater Copenhagen Authority’s generous designations. Second, the principle of station proximity was strengthened by requiring offices and service businesses above 1500 m² to be located within 600 m from a railway station. Offices and service business below 1500 m² were in the inner urban area to be located within 1000 m and in the outer urban area within 1200 m.

Despite the ministry’s strengthening of the spatial framework, there was a general support to the *‘Finger Plan 2007’* among the municipal planners interviewed. The municipal planners highlighted the overall spatial structure as an important framework for the urban development in the Greater Copenhagen Area.

“I believe actually that the important elements in the *‘Finger Plan’* have been maintained. And you have in Gladsaxe the attitude that the *‘Finger Plan’* is brilliant and important, and you cannot mess with the fundamental principles.” (Interview, KE, 2010, author’s translation)

“I believe that the *‘Finger Plan’* is legitimate [...] so if you believe in the paradigm of the *‘Finger Plan’*, well that you can control urban development and certain functions must be located certain places, then I believe in that it has to be steered somehow for example through a national planning directive.” (Interview, TR, 2010, author’s translation)

“Yes, well fundamentally it is in our part of Denmark necessary with an overall planning, because it would probably otherwise slip. Well, there is no doubt about that. It is necessary. It is one big residence and labour market, people commute crisscross [...] you are not limited by the administrative boundaries. I do not believe people think much

about them. It is one big area, and therefore you need of course to have an overall planning and some kind of framework. And there are probably also some things that have to be quite, well topdown, where you say this is the framework within which the municipalities can expand.” (Interview, HB, 2010, author’s translation)

Instead, the municipal planners expressed their concerns about the national environment centre’s administration of the ‘Finger Plan’, which was criticised for being too inflexible and rigid.

”It is administrated very rigidly [...] there is no will or ability to look at planning issues and then say this is a good idea. It is a good idea for the municipality which brings up the issue, but maybe even for the region and even nationally. It is a good idea, how do we do this? [...] But you do not act like that at all. You look at, what is it you want? Then look in the book [the ‘*Finger Plan 2007*’] – ‘no that is impossible’ or ‘it might be possible at some point, but it is not yet, and we don’t know when.’ [...] the minister cannot spend his time on processing single cases or meet with mayors all the time, and that is also why they say no.” (Interview, HB, 2010, author’s translation)

This problem was also recognised by a ministry planner, who expressed his concerns about the national environment centres’ case-by-case administration, which he argued cannot take the same solution-oriented approach as the central administration of the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning (Interview, PHN, 2009). There seems therefore to be a need for supplementing the planning administration of the ‘Finger Plan’ with more solution-oriented planning approaches.

SUPPLEMENTING THE ‘FINGER PLAN 2007’ BY INFORMAL STRATEGY-MAKING

Initial discussions on expanding the spatial framework for the Greater Copenhagen Area had already surfaced in connection the ‘*Finger Plan 2007*’ planning process. Here, the Ministry of the Environment approached the municipalities at the outskirts of the Greater Copenhagen Area to discuss potentially extending the urban corridors to accommodate the increasing urbanisation. Some of these discussions turned later into the strategic spatial planning process in Region Zealand (see chapter 6). Despite

ambitions of a continued dialogue between the state and the municipalities expressed in the *'Finger Plan 2007'*, a ministry planner highlighted how the tendency after the publication of the *'Finger Plan'* and the structural reform had been to downscale the central administration of the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning's role in this dialogue:

"I had imagined that we would run some dialogue projects and that the Minister of Environment was the one to set perspective on all these municipal wishes and also compare them to objectives of regional balance [...] But the tendency from the management in here [the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning] has been to close down that dialogue a bit, and say that the dialogue runs between the national environment centre Roskilde, as the administrators of the *'Finger Plan'*, and the municipalities. That is not something we [the central administration in the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning] should do. [...] I had probably imagined when we prepared the *'Finger Plan'* that we would have a more active role in the dialogue with the municipalities, than what is going on at the moment." (Interview, PHN, 2009, author's translation)

Along the same lines, a municipal planner stressed that planning today is much more than regulation, and that it is required that the Ministry of the Environment in its services is able to wear different hats, being both the regulative state body and partner in development-oriented dialogues projects:

"... I believe the challenge for the ministry in the future is that you have to wear two hats. Well, you are of course writing the planning act and the national planning directives and you do the topdown planning regulation, the right plan. And on the other side, there is an increasing demand about participation, dialogue, and process, and being able to create something action-oriented and develop new methods. [...] That is the challenge, because they [the ministry planners] [...] are characterised by a traditional practice with a solid, I have to say a solid and well-argumented planning, frame planning, nothing bad about that, I think it is very solid, but it has to be supplemented today. [...] So in this way, I believe the state can be the midwife around these things, and that is a new role for them. But I believe it would be nice, if they could play that role, because it can secure quality in the planning. They can

contribute to a new type of planning documents, which do not fall into the hierarchical system with national planning reports, regional plans, municipal plans, but as another type of plans which still might structure what happens out there.” (Interview, TR, 2010, author’s translation)

In this critique of the limited focus on strategic spatial planning in the Ministry of the Environment, it is important to highlight at least one informal spatial strategy-making process at the sub-regional scale in the Greater Copenhagen Area, which potentially might lead to new ways of imagining and framing spatial planning in the urban area.

The possibilities for revitalising the old industrial areas located along the outer ring road in the Greater Copenhagen Area has been a sensitive spatial issue, as these areas do not live up to the principle of station proximity in the ‘Finger Plan’. The municipalities located along the ring road have therefore for two decades been lobbying for a light railway along the ring road. In 2005 a report prepared by seven municipalities and various ministry and regional bodies concluded that a light railway along the outer ring road would open up for a more workplace intensive use of the former industrial areas (Ministry of the Environment et al., 2005). In 2008 a spatial strategy-making process was launched, involving the 10 municipalities located along the proposed light railway line, the Ministry of Transport, the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning, the national environment centre Roskilde and the Capital Region. The partners produced in the beginning of 2010 a spatial vision, entitled ‘*The City Circle Vision*’ (Project City Circle, 2010). In December 2010 the ideas were taken further by a group of consultants hired by the Danish foundation Realdania, who proposed the vision of a ‘*Loop City*’, involving both sides of the Øresund. It remains to be seen to what extent these ideas will inspire the Ministry of the Environment’s forthcoming preparation of the ‘*Finger Plan 2012*’.

CONCLUSION

The sub-case study of strategic spatial planning in the Greater Copenhagen Area is in many ways more complex than the two other sub-cases presented in chapter 5 and 6. The Greater Copenhagen Area has a particular history of strategic spatial planning at the regional scale on which the ‘*Finger Plan 2007*’ builds. At the same time, the latest version of the ‘Finger Plan’ and its legal status should more than anything be understood as a response to rescaling of planning powers as part of the structural reform. The ‘*Finger Plan 2007*’ was introduced as a more strategic spatial framework,

strengthening the spatial planning in the Greater Copenhagen Area by putting the overall spatial structure in the centre of the planning administration. Whilst the municipalities generally support the need for an overall spatial framework, they find the administration of the framework too rigid.

This suggests the need for other forums where solution-oriented spatial strategy-making can take place. The question that remains unanswered is how spatial strategy-making taking place in these forums will feed into the formal debates in the upcoming revision of the 'Finger Plan'. Will the '*Finger Plan 2012*' bring up the issue of expanding the spatial framework, or perhaps discuss how to integrate strategic spatial planning in the Greater Copenhagen Area, Region Zealand and beyond?

MANAGING CONTESTED PLANNING RATIONALITIES IN THE EASTERN JUTLAND REGION

This chapter presents the second sub-case study of strategic spatial planning in Denmark. In the beginning of 2008, the Ministry of the Environment initiated a dialogue-based spatial strategy-making process with the 17 municipalities in the Eastern Jutland Region to prepare a spatial framework for the urban region. During the process a spatial vision was published in September 2008 and a set of recommendations for future urban development published in June 2010.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of Eastern Jutland as a coherent urban region goes back to the end of the 1990s, where a group of municipal mayors and prominent business leaders formed the idea of an Eastern Jutland Region under the name of *Kronestad*. However, the idea soon stranded due to internal disagreements. In 2006 Eastern Jutland was officially articulated as an urban region by the Ministry of the Environment, who stressed in the 2006 national planning report that Eastern Jutland was developing into a functional conurbation along the urban corridor from Kolding to Randers with more than 1 million inhabitants (Ministry of the Environment, 2006). The articulation of Eastern Jutland as an emerging urban ribbon was informed by spatial analyses of development trends in commuter patterns, urban development along the transport corridor, and location and accessibility of workplaces, confirming increasing functional integration in the region (Andersen et al., 2005; Hovgesen et al., 2005).

The Eastern Jutland Region is characterised by a strong tradition for inter-municipal cooperation, but so far this cooperation has been limited to the northern and southern part of the region only, dividing the region into two strong coalitions with little interaction between. In the northern part of the region, a coalition exists around Denmark's second largest city Aarhus which traditionally has cooperated with its surrounding municipalities on municipal planning issues. In the southern part of the region, six municipalities make up the 'Triangle Area', a municipal cooperation

going back to the early 1990s. In 2004 the municipalities produced a common spatial framework for their municipal planning, which in 2009 resulted in a common municipal plan (Triangle Area, 2009).

The divide between the northern and southern part of the urban region originated from the former county boundaries of Aarhus and Vejle counties. As part of the structural reform, the number of municipalities in Eastern Jutland was reduced from 54 to 17 municipalities. The administrative boundaries of the new regions, Region Mid Jutland and Region South Denmark continued to divide the urban region into a northern and southern part, now drawing the line a bit further north. The new administrative regions were created mainly for health care purposes and did not fit the scale of the emerging functional conurbation in Eastern Jutland. As a consequence, the Ministry of the Environment decided to define its own urban region of Eastern Jutland for spatial planning purposes only. The scale of the urban region was defined, partly, according to the spatial analyses confirming the increasing functional integration, and partly, by including all municipalities in the Triangle Area and surrounding area of Aarhus for pragmatic reasons, despite their more rural characteristics. The pragmatic demarcation of the urban region had its advantages in terms of deciding who to include in the strategy-making process, but it also meant that the mental boundaries of the Eastern Jutland Region remained rather fuzzy.

CONFLICTING POINTS OF DEPARTURE FOR STRATEGY-MAKING

The Ministry of the Environment stressed in the 2006 national planning report a need for initiating long-term spatial planning in the Eastern Jutland Region and establish an overall spatial structure (Ministry of the Environment, 2006). The ministry highlighted two future challenges for spatial planning in Eastern Jutland: to ensure the quality of the landscape in Eastern Jutland, including limit urban sprawl and prevent Eastern Jutland from developing into an urban ribbon, and to limit congestion and ensure an efficient transport infrastructure. The Eastern Jutland Region was increasingly suffering from a lack of overall spatial policies, which allowed not only transport intensive companies, demanding high accessibility to the motorway network, but also offices and service businesses to locate at the exits along the motorway. The latter business category saw primarily the location along the motorway as a display window for the company (Hovgesen et al., 2005). These development trends did not only result in increasing urban sprawl, threatening the landscape characteristics and

Box 5.1: The key characteristics of the Eastern Jutland Region (Ministry of the Environment, 2008e, p.5)

The Eastern Jutland Region consists of 17 municipalities located along the national railway and motorway. The urban region is home to Denmark's second largest city Aarhus (237,551) and the old market towns of Randers (59,565), Silkeborg (41,674), Horsens (51,670), Vejle (50,213), Fredericia (39,391), and Kolding (55,596), all located within just 25-50 km from each and well-connected by transport infrastructures. The urban region has experienced remarkable growth in the last 10 years with 6 pct. population growth (national average 3 pct.) and 7 pct. growth in workplaces (national average 5 pct.). Today, the region is home to a population of around 1.2 million and 625,000 workplaces (23 pct. of national population and workplaces).

the scenic journey along the motorway, it also generated increasing local traffic and congestion on the motorway.

As part of the structural reform in 2007, the planning authority for designating areas for future urban development was transferred to the municipalities. The rescaling of planning powers led to increasing concerns within the Ministry of the Environment about whether the municipalities would be able to fulfil their new responsibilities, or whether urban development would be prioritised at the expense of environmental issues and the landscape. The Ministry of Environment's point of departure for the strategy-making process in Eastern Jutland was therefore to prepare a spatial framework, regulating the urban development in the region. The 2006 national planning report opened up for a more flexible use of national planning directives, stressing how they could be used as 'binding consensus papers' in dialogue-based strategy-making processes (Ministry of the Environment, 2006). A former head of planning in the Ministry of the Environment explained how this in fact had been the intention in Eastern Jutland:

"... at one meeting I attended, I believe, I brought up the idea that when you have had the dialogue and had come as far as where the green patches should be, where the green areas in the Eastern Jutland urban ribbon should be, where the business nodes were, where the nodes on the motorway were, where the urban development was roughly. Then you could prepare a new form of national planning directive, which looked like the 'Finger Plan', that you locked your conclusions in a national planning directive. [...] But the municipalities could not grasp

that, no matter how pedagogical I tried to explain that it was with a point of departure in [the dialogue]. You could also write a common announcement with appendix maps and everything, but it had more power and weight, if it was a national planning directive, and that could have been a fun new way of using the national planning directive.” (Interview, PBN, 2009, author’s translation)

The Ministry of the Environment’s strong regulatory point of departure for the process was met by resistance from the municipalities, who failed to see how a stronger regulation of the future urban development would benefit the urban region’s economic growth and international competitiveness. The municipalities perceived the issues raised by the ministry as issues of primary concern for the municipal planning and therefore outside the scope of the spatial strategy-making process, as these issues were already being regulated through the planning act. It was the general municipal opinion that if the ministry believed stronger regulatory mechanisms were needed, these could be introduced within the legal framework already in place. The municipalities’ point of departure for the process was a different reading of the 2006 national planning report. The municipalities noticed how the government now acknowledged the growth potentials in Eastern Jutland and expected the strategy-making process to be about how to sustain the growth in the urban region. A municipal planner highlighted how there already were so many limitations on urban development in Eastern Jutland that there was a need to discuss which planning guidelines were more important than others.

“... seen from my perspective the problem in Eastern Jutland is [...] if we both have to live up to the principles that we cannot build in OSD areas [special drinking water areas], we should focus on density close to the stations, [...] we cannot build in the open land, and of course we cannot build in preserved areas. If we have to live up to all those principles then it is basically impossible to build [...] unless there is some kind of weighing out of what counts the most. Is it the OSD, or is it that you cannot build in the open land, or what is it?” (Interview, HSB, 2010, author’s translation)

On one hand, the municipalities had reservations against entering a spatial strategy-making process with the state. Especially, the municipalities in the Triangle Area feared that the new spatial logic of an Eastern Jutland urban region might eventually jeopardize or replace their municipal cooperation built up over almost two decades.

On the other hand, the municipalities feared that the Ministry of the Environment would introduce a national planning directive itself, if the municipalities refused to join the process. Joining the process would at least give the municipalities an opportunity to have a saying and a possibility to prevent some of the intended regulatory mechanisms from being introduced. In addition, the municipalities saw the strategy-making process as an opportunity to build a common municipal platform for transport infrastructure lobbying at the scale of Eastern Jutland.

Whilst the municipalities clearly had common interests in joining the strategy-making process, different rationalities can also be identified among the municipalities. For some municipalities the process was seen as means to carry the articulation of the urban region forward, a stepping stone towards building a regional identity at the scale of Eastern Jutland.

"So what I wanted with this was to turn the Eastern Jutland urban ribbon into a phenomenon, which played a role in the debate, and on the longer term also something where you might say, we are big and we contribute so much to Denmark's growth, so we have also a right to something. [...] And you might say what is decisive? From my perspective it is just that it says 'Eastern Jutland'. It is just the Eastern Jutland urban ribbon, the more times it is presented and talked about and held meetings about. [...] It might be a bit difficult to understand, but it is huge. It is like this something comes into existence. When does something start to exist? Well, the more you talk about it and suddenly it is something which is there. [...] And I am actually not so preoccupied with what those reports say. I look more at how many column inches it gives in the newspapers, and how many places you talk about the Eastern Jutland urban ribbon." (Interview, NA, 2010, author's translation)

For other municipalities the aim of the process remained somewhat fuzzy. Instead, the process was more seen as an opportunity to experiment with new forms of governance at new planning scales.

"Our concrete aim with this one project was perhaps not as specific. It was from the beginning just to create new cooperation relations, use it to create a new platform for the municipalities, a speaking tube really, finding a forum where we are able to talk towards what the important strategies are. We did not necessarily have an expectation that when

we had been through this project, then we were done, and then we had an Eastern Jutland plan. It was actually not our point of departure. It was rather the platform.” (Interview, HSB, 2010, author’s translation)

The discrepancy between the Ministry of the Environment’s and the municipalities’ main rationalities for joining the process has been clear to all participants in the process from the early stage. Several municipal planners highlighted how a proper matching of expectations were not carried out in the beginning of the process, leaving the tensions between the two sets of planning rationalities unresolved.¹ However, after these initial starting troubles, the ministry took a less regulatory approach to the strategy-making process. This change of strategy should also be understood in the context of the restructurings within the ministry as part of the structural reform, and not at least the appointment of a liberal Minister of the Environment. The changes in the ministry resulted in a more neoliberal political climate, characterised by a less regulatory approach to planning.² The changing planning approach manifested itself slowly in the Eastern Jutland strategy-making process, creating increasingly uncertainty about what the aims and the intended output of the process were. Even the ministry planner involved in the process had at times difficulties in figuring out what their superiors wanted to achieve through the process. This insecurity was interpreted by the municipalities as a lack of ministry focus and power, which allowed the municipalities to push for their own (often contradictory) agendas.

THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

As the Eastern Jutland Region was a new scale for spatial strategy-making, an organisational structure for the process had to be invented from scratch. The core partners in the process were the Ministry of the Environment and 17 municipalities, who all contributed financially to the strategy-making process in terms of funding and manpower. The Ministry of Transport participated also in the process, but remained less active. The organisation of the strategy-making process was divided into three levels: the political ownership group, the steering group, and the planning forum (see figure 5.1). The political ownership group consisted of the Minister of the Environment and the 17 municipal mayors. The political decision-makers were somewhat detached from the process. They met at key points in the process such as in the beginning and in the end or when other key decisions had to be made. The steering group consisted of municipal directors, municipal heads of planning, together with ministry directors

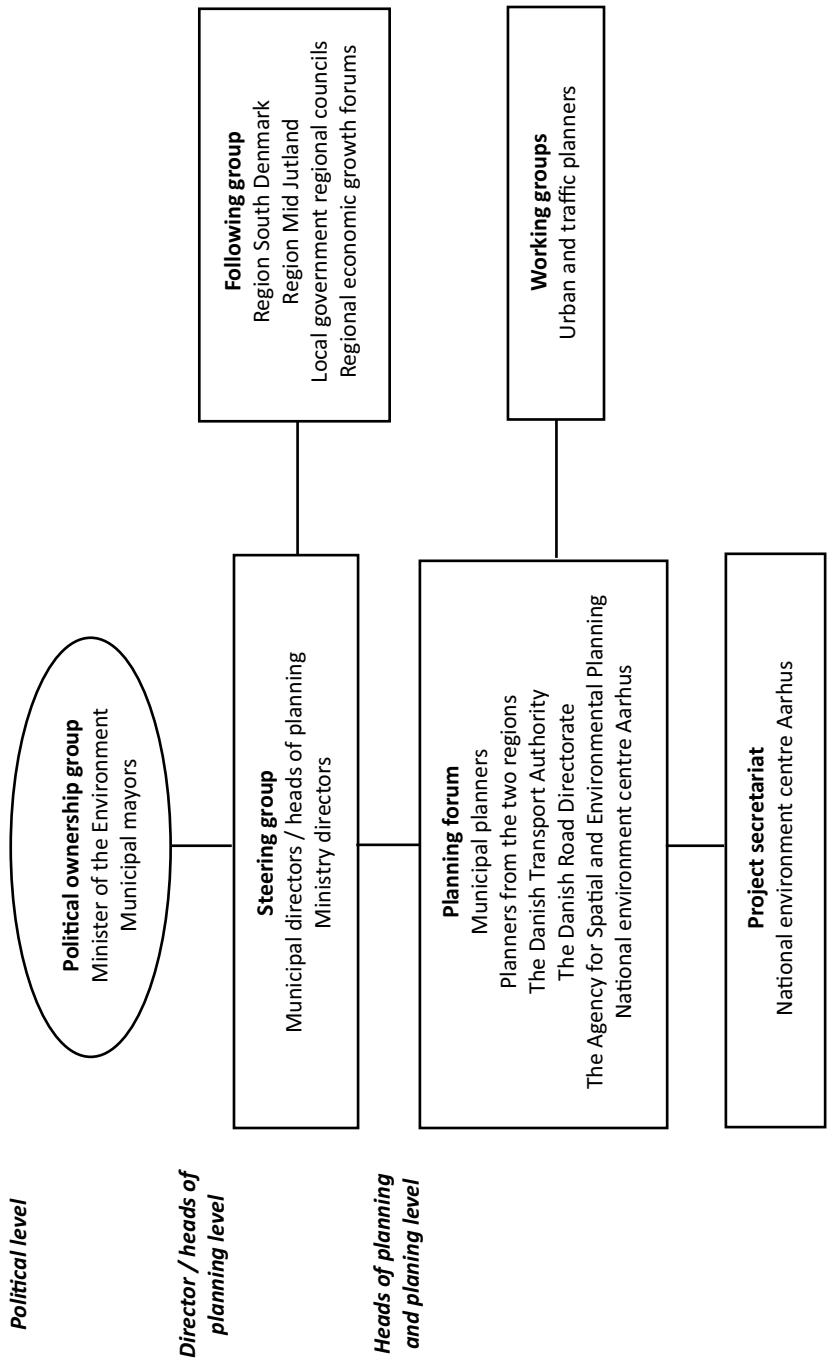


Figure 5.1: The organisational structure of the strategic spatial planning process in Eastern Jutland

from the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Transport. The group was responsible for preparation of the spatial vision and later the recommendations, and for informing the following group. On the side of the process, a following group was created consisting of the two administrative regions of Region Mid Jutland and Region South Denmark along with the attached regional bodies such as the local government regional councils and the regional economic growth forums. On the contrary to the strategy-making process in Region Zealand (see chapter 6), the local government regional councils came to play a less dominant role in the Eastern Jutland process.

The first phase of the strategy-making process was limited to the level of municipal directors and heads of planning. In the second phase, a planning forum was created consisting of planners from the participating organisations with the aim of getting the strategic work at the scale of the Eastern Jutland Region anchored in the municipal planning departments. The daily work in the process was carried out by a project secretariat, which on the contrary to the twin-process in Region Zealand (see chapter 6) was decentralised to national environment centre in Aarhus. This meant that the national environment centre had to play two roles in connection to the municipalities during the strategy-making process, as the authoritative and administrative body when approving the municipal plans, and the flexible dialogue partner when discussing matters in the auspices of the strategy-making process.

THE PROCESS OF SPATIAL STRATEGY-MAKING IN EASTERN JUTLAND

The spatial strategy-making process in Eastern Jutland was launched in January 2008 at a political conference (Ministry of the Environment, 2008a). During the spring 2008, three spatial analyses were carried out by consultants researching the location of different types of businesses in the urban region and their international and national connections (Ministry of the Environment, 2008b), the landscape characteristics of the urban region (Ministry of the Environment, 2008c), and the need for new investments in transport infrastructure (Ministry of the Environment, 2008d). The preparation of the analyses was supported by three working groups consisting of municipal and ministry planners with expertise within the analysed themes. The latter analysis, focusing on the urban region's future need for investments in transport infrastructure, was an attempt to follow up on the Infrastructure Commission's report (2008) published earlier that year, and seen as a point of departure for developing

Box 5.2: The overall vision for the Eastern Jutland Region (Ministry of the Environment, 2008e, p.8)

- 1) Eastern Jutland should develop into a strong urban region with international competitiveness
- 2) Eastern Jutland should develop into a driving force for growth in Denmark together with the Øresund Region
- 3) Eastern Jutland should develop as strong, attractive, and sustainable cities connected closely by efficient transport systems

a common municipal platform for transport infrastructure lobbying at the scale of Eastern Jutland.

Based on the three analyses, a spatial vision, entitled '*Vision Eastern Jutland*' (Ministry of the Environment, 2008e), was published in September 2008. The vision was rather broadly formulated and failed to deal with the original problems formulated in the national planning report, such as urban development along the motorway and the emerging urban ribbon. Instead, the vision presented three overall goals for Eastern Jutland's future development (see box 5.2). The vision clearly reflected the municipal aims of building regional identity and promoting international competitiveness, whilst the Ministry of the Environment's initial regulatory ambitions were backgrounded. The vision was richly illustrated by theme maps highlighting the urban region's main characteristics within the themes of the three spatial analyses. Attempts were also made to illustrate the potential internal and external synergies of the Eastern Jutland Region (see plate 5). On the more specific level, the vision revealed little progress in terms of prioritising between the different proposed investments in transport infrastructure. The broadly formulated nature of the vision was an early forewarning of how difficult it would be for the partners to agree on what the strategy-making process should be about.

The Ministry of the Environment saw the spatial vision as an intermediate result in reaching its aim of preparing a spatial framework for the urban region. A second phase of the process was launched with the aim of turning the spatial vision into something more specific. In November 2009, a ministry planner explained how he hoped the process would result in more specific maps, indicating how the future urban development in Eastern Jutland would take place (Interview, JP, 2009).³

This process started with a screening of municipal plans carried out by a consultant in the spring 2009. The aim was to establish an overview over how areas designated

for urban development in the municipal planning ‘fitted’ national spatial policies. This exercise sparked heavy discussions, as it was experienced by the municipalities as a ministry attempt to ‘educate’ the municipalities in the right planning philosophy in terms station proximate urban development. The tense atmosphere continued at the political midway conference in the autumn 2009, where the municipal mayors largely disregarded the ministry’s too regulatory planning approach and requested a stronger focus on economic development. The mayors felt a discrepancy between their own expectations to the process and the issues brought forward by the ministry.

“What resulted in the heavy political critique was [...] that you did not focus enough on growth. You were too preoccupied with buildings along the motorway and other things. I think many municipal politicians felt, why the hell does this concern us? They did of course not put it like that. [...] but it is where the ministry has its competency. Where the others [municipalities] thought, what about the national investments, what about infrastructure, what about growth? Which the Ministry of the Environment did not know how to deal with, but it is the Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs and some others [ministries], who have to be included. So I believe that you politically felt a discrepancy between what you were working on and the expectations you had. How could the state contribute in these areas? And all the places where you felt they [the state] could contribute with money or something else, they were absent. And all the places where you felt they [the state] only wanted to regulate, they were very much present. So this tension really emerged at that meeting, which meant that they [the Ministry of the Environment] went home and lapsed into a ‘coma’, and then long time passed.” (Interview, CN, 2010, author’s translation)

The negative attitude towards some of the key spatial issues in the strategy-making process (at least from the ministry’s perspective) caused the ministry by a surprise, which meant it had to rethink the process. A ministry planner explained how there after this conference was a need for some ‘internal clearing’ in the ministry in order to come up with a plan for how the process could proceed (Interview, VM, 2009). It was clear that the process at this point was stuck. This situation obviously frustrated the ministry planners in charge of the process, who in the autumn 2009 did not know how to proceed or indeed what the ministry’s policies were.

“At the moment [November 2009], we are awaiting a clearance not at least internally in the system regarding the minister [...] there was a lively discussion at the meeting we had in October [2009] about the further work. And we are in the process of following up on that now. [...] In any case we need to know within this house [the Ministry of the Environment], where we have the minister, how much the minister wants to us to confront the municipalities. Before we start to show our muscles to the municipalities, we need to know where we have the minister in this case. This is where we are right now.” (Interview, VM, 2009, author’s translation)

In order to resolve the crisis, the head of planning in the Ministry of the Environment invited behind the scenes the biggest municipalities in Eastern Jutland to a ‘crisis meeting’ to discuss how the process could proceed. The ministry asking the municipalities for advice on how to run its own process was interpreted as a clear sign of weakness by the municipalities. According to several of the municipal planners interviewed, one of the greatest problems in the process was that the ministry was not clarified about what it wanted to achieve from the process. This meant that it was difficult to enter discussions about what a realistic outcome of the process might be.

“... but they [the ministry] have not been very clear about what they wanted from this. They have rather felt that their task was to get the parties to speak to each other. But you could have wanted a role, where it was a bit clearer which expectations they had to the project. I have several times said, now the Ministry of the Environment has to come forward, now you have to say what you expect from this project, what is it you want from this? They have been very unobtrusive. They have left it more to the municipalities. I think it is unclear what their role was.” (Interview, HJB, 2010, author’s translation)

To make things even worse, the support for the process weakened even further as about half of the municipal mayors were replaced in the local government election in the autumn 2009. The political ownership to the project built up over years (despite how weak it might have seemed) suddenly vanished over night. In addition, a new Minister of the Environment was appointed in the beginning of 2010, which meant that the process had to be ‘kick-started’ in the beginning of 2010. As a result, little progress had been made by the beginning of 2010 in terms of turning the spatial vision formulated in 2008 into something more tangible.

The motivation for continuing the process came from the Ministry of Transport, who stressed in the beginning of 2010 that a spatial strategy had to be produced by August 2010, if it was to have any influence on the ministry's strategic analysis of the need for future investments in transport infrastructure in Eastern Jutland (Ministry of Transport, 2009b). This inspired a small group of planners from the steering group to form a working group with the aim of preparing a more detailed spatial strategy to inform the Ministry of Transport's analysis. The working group was primarily formed by members of the steering group with a strong interest in spatial planning. These interests were not shared by all members of the steering group, who had different understandings of which kind of document the working group was intended to prepare. As a consequence, the working group was continuously asked to reduce the planning related aspects of their work. Suggestions to take inspiration from the twin process in Region Zealand, which at this stage had progressed further, were also dismissed as such an approach was considered too excessive in terms of distributing future urban development. It was feared that the larger municipalities would take up all the growth in such a future scenario.⁴ As a consequence, a smaller municipality decided to leave the process before the final document was prepared. By the end of the process, it became more and more evident that little new would emerge from the process, and it became more a matter of closing down the process without the Ministry of the Environment or the municipalities losing face.

In June 2010, the intended spatial framework was published as a set of recommendations for urban development and transport planning (Ministry of the Environment, 2010d). The recommendations included among other things an Eastern Jutland translation of the Copenhagen principle of station proximity (see plate 6). However, the continuous watering down of the working group's strategy meant that the recommendations "did not have many vitamins left" (Interview, NA, 2010, author's translation), as a municipal director phrased it.

CONTESTED SCALES FOR TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE LOBBYING

Whilst the different planning rationalities and understandings of what the strategy-making process was supposed to deliver provides one explanation for why the process turned out as it did, the contested nature of the scale of the Eastern Jutland Region represents another explanation.

The Eastern Jutland Region was the Ministry of the Environment's invention. The municipalities entered the process with the aim of building a common lobby platform for Eastern Jutland in order to stand stronger in the national competition for investments in transport infrastructure. Early in the process, it became clear that the northern and southern part of the urban region had very different ideas about which new transport infrastructures were needed. The northern and southern part constituted already separate entities for inter-municipal cooperation, and the divide was strengthened further by the organisation of the local government regional councils, which significance as platforms for inter-municipal policy-making grew during the strategy-making process.

On the side of the strategy-making process, the northern coalition around Aarhus began increasingly together with Region Mid Jutland to lobby for a bridge across Kattegat, including a high-speed railway connection between Aarhus and Copenhagen. In 2008 the official lobby platform, the Kattegat Committee, was launched, including leading persons from major interest organisations, private corporations, and universities. In the autumn 2009, the lobby platform presented a vision of one major metropolitan region in Denmark, the '*Metropol Denmark*' (Kattegat Committee, 2009). The vision did not only contradict the spatial logic of the Eastern Jutland Region, it also shifted focus away from the need for investments in transport infrastructure within the urban region. The Triangle Area was clearly against the bridge, as it would mean that it no longer would be placed at the core transport node in Denmark, connecting Jutland and Zealand via Funen. Instead, the Triangle Area launched the idea of a new motorway in the middle of Jutland connecting Vejle with Herning and Viborg. As a result, a lot of energy was spent on discussing future investments in transport infrastructure at the auspices of the local government regional councils which had little to do with the urban ribbon in Eastern Jutland.

As the inter-municipal policy-making and lobby work at the scale of the local government regional councils became more and more significant, it seemed at least to some extent to outcompete the Eastern Jutland Region as an appropriate scale for spatial strategy-making, and not at least transport infrastructure lobbying. A municipal director highlighted how the ad hoc formalisation at the scale of Eastern Jutland gradually lost its significance, as the more formalised forums of the local government regional councils grew into significance (Interview, NA, 2010).⁵

CONCLUSION

The spatial strategy-making process in Eastern Jutland has been characterised by contested planning rationalities and understandings of what the process was supposed to deliver. Initially, the Ministry of the Environment aimed at introducing a spatial framework to regulate the future urban development in the urban region. This aim was gradually abandoned due to municipal resistance and the changing political climate within the ministry. The municipalities saw the strategy-making process as an opportunity to build a regional identity at the scale of Eastern Jutland and potentially develop an international competitive urban region. An important step in these ambitions was to build common a lobby platform to attract investments in transport infrastructure. However, as the municipalities realised that they could not agree on which transport infrastructures to prioritise, the foundation for the strategy-making process began slowly to crumble away. In the end, a set of recommendations were prepared, which is expected to have little influence on the future municipal planning in Eastern Jutland.

After the publication of the recommendations, the Ministry of the Environment retired from the process, and the spatial policy of preparing a spatial framework at the scale of the Eastern Jutland Region seems to be abandoned.

NOTES

- 1 In chapter 7, I argue that the limited success of the Eastern Jutland strategy-making process can be explained by unresolved tensions between contested planning rationalities.
- 2 In chapter 7, I discuss how the increasingly neoliberal political climate in Ministry of the Environment influenced the episodes of strategic spatial planning.
- 3 I present the quotation from the ministry planner in chapter 8, where I discuss how a Euclidean conception of spatiality seems to be most dominant among ministry planners, as the Ministry of the Environment's primary function is to supervise and regulate spatial planning at lower tiers.
- 4 In chapter 8, I discuss how the spatial politics in the strategy-making process in Eastern Jutland prevented the municipalities from preparing an overall spatial framework.
- 5 I present a quotation from the municipal director in chapter 9, where I discuss the competing scales of cross-municipal policy-making in Eastern Jutland.

HANDLING THE SPATIAL POLITICS OF STRATEGY- MAKING IN REGION ZEALAND

This chapter presents the third and final sub-case study of strategic spatial planning in Denmark. In August 2008, the Ministry of the Environment initiated a dialogue-based spatial strategy-making process with the 17 municipalities in Region Zealand and the administrative Region of Zealand to prepare a spatial framework for the urban region. In March 2010, a draft of a spatial framework and an idea catalogue of best practice examples of sustainable urban development were published.

INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of the 2000s, there was an increasing concern that the rapid urbanisation in the Greater Copenhagen Area would soon exhaust the spatial framework of the 'Finger Plan'. The increasing house prices in the Greater Copenhagen Area had already forced many families to live outside the capital area, putting a significant pressure on designated housing areas in the surrounding municipalities, not to mention the major road connections leading commuters to and from central Copenhagen in the rush hour. As a response, the Ministry of the Environment approached the municipalities at the outskirts of the Greater Copenhagen Area to discuss potentially extending the urban corridors to accommodate the increasing urbanisation (see chapter 4). Two of these 'finger extension discussions' involved several municipalities in what later became Region Zealand. These processes can therefore be regarded as early forerunners for the strategy-making process in Region Zealand.

The idea behind the strategy-making process in Region Zealand emerged within a small group of planners in the Ministry of the Environment. Together with the Danish Transport Authority, the group was involved in a regional economic analysis of a potential new railway connection between Copenhagen and Ringsted. The analysis concluded that the rail connection would be most cost effective, if there was

Box 6.1: The key characteristics of Region Zealand (Region Zealand, 2010)

Region Zealand was created in the structural reform in 2007, replacing the three former counties of Roskilde, Storstrøm and Vestsjælland. The region consists mainly of the surrounding area to the Greater Copenhagen Area and the southern islands of Møn, Falster, and Lolland. The region includes also six municipalities (Lejre, Roskilde, Greve, Solrød, Køge and Stevns) regulated by the '*Finger Plan 2007*'. As part of the structural reform, the number of municipalities in the region was reduced from 58 to 17. The biggest municipalities in terms of population in the region are today Roskilde (81,285), Næstved (80,954) and Slagelse (77,457). The region is inhabited by around 820,000 citizens.

a significant amount of passengers in both ends and it had attractive stops on the journey. These conclusions matched a wish within the Ministry of the Environment to explore to what extent it was possible to stabilise quality of the towns connected to the railway in Zealand through planning activities (Interview, ATL, 2009), and a strategic spatial planning process with the aim of exploring this issue further was written into the 2006 national planning report. The report highlighted how the entire island of Zealand should be understood as a coherent labour market with extensive commuting (Ministry of the Environment, 2006). It was therefore necessary to prepare an overall spatial framework to regulate the urban development and reduce congestion and urban sprawl outside the Greater Copenhagen Area. Preparation of an overall spatial framework at the scale of the entire island was not considered a viable political approach, as the '*Finger Plan 2007*' had been prepared under severe political pressure as part of the structural reform (see chapter 4).

How the Ministry of the Environment intended to implement the strategy-making process, or whether it in fact was the ministry's intention to implement the project, remains uncertain (Interview, ATL, 2009). At least the discussions on how to implement the process did not start formally until 2008. Here, Region Zealand approached the ministry to discuss how the strategy-making process could be implemented. The region was keen to promote its own role as a significant actor in the region and saw clear potential synergies between the strategy-making process and the region's spatial development planning. The region managed to persuade the ministry to adjust the scale of the strategy-making process to fit the region's administrative boundaries (Interview, RL, 2010). As a consequence, the strategy-making process was initiated at the scale of Region Zealand, including six municipalities already being regulated by the '*Finger Plan 2007*'. Although Region Zealand played a significant role in facilitating the process, it remained primarily the Ministry of the Environment's and

the municipalities' process. The process is best understood as located in-between the municipal and national scale in a parallel track to the region's spatial development planning.

SPATIAL STRATEGY-MAKING AS TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE LOBBYING

The strategic spatial planning process in Region Zealand was most likely intended to have a regulatory approach, paving the ground for a national planning directive on the longer term. However, in the start-up phase a more careful approach was taken by the ministry, who stressed that the aim was not to prepare a national planning directive to supplement the '*Finger Plan 2007*' (Interview, ATL, 2009). Instead, the aim of the process was, seen from the Ministry of the Environment's perspective, to prepare an overall spatial framework through a collaborative process, which was approved by all partners as an informal guidance to the municipal planning. Just as in Eastern Jutland (see chapter 5), the municipalities saw the strategy-making process as an opportunity to cultivate their interests through close cooperation with the state. The municipalities and Region Zealand had just a few months before the process was launched jointly prepared a policy document advocating for new investments in transport infrastructure in Region Zealand (Region Zealand et al., 2008), as a follow-up on the Infrastructure Commission's report published earlier that year (Infrastructure Commission, 2008). The policy document played an important role in shaping the municipalities' and the region's point of departure for entering the strategy-making process with the state.

At the time, there were limited experiences with cross-municipal cooperation in the region, although a few early attempts had been made. In the end of the 1990s, the municipalities in the southern part of Zealand joined forces to develop an urban network with the aim of gaining status as a national centre. The matter was discussed in the national planning reports from 1997 and 2000 (Ministry of the Environment and Energy, 1997, 2000), however the application remained unsuccessful. As a consequence, there was a general feeling among the municipalities in the region that they had been overlooked in terms of state investments in transport infrastructure, as they previously had not been able to organise and perform the same lobby work as elsewhere in the country. The strategy-making process was therefore seen as a convenient opportunity to build such a platform.

"It is of course a competitive situation. But we can see that in the transport area or the infrastructure area in Jutland, they are very, very good at joining and fighting for different things, so they can get one motorway after the other, where in Zealand you have not had that tradition." (Interview, AV, 2010, author's translation)

"... we are experiencing in Zealand, that we are worse off and have not been good at speaking with one voice in order to get national investments and get focus directed towards Zealand. It has often been the Capital Area or Eastern Jutland [...] if we could get a common platform, which we could support, which was not too constraining, then I believe many would say that there was an interest for it." (Interview, EHP, 2010, author's translation)

The tension between the state's aim of preparing an overall spatial framework, and the region's and municipalities' perception of the process as a convenient lobby platform for state investments in transport infrastructure remained unresolved throughout the process. However, on the contrary to the process in Eastern Jutland (see chapter 5), the state, region, and municipalities came an important step further in preparing a spatial framework for Region Zealand.

THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Just as in the strategy-making process in Eastern Jutland, an organisational structure for the process in Region Zealand had to be invented from scratch. The Ministry of the Environment, Region Zealand and 17 municipalities were the key actors in the process, who all contributed financially to the process in terms of funding and manpower. The Ministry of Transport and the regional public transport company were also part of the process, but played a less dominant role. They acted primarily as experts on public transportation matters. Whilst the distribution of costs and manpower between the three key actors created a sense of equality and interdependency, the municipalities saw it also as a sign of a weakened state in the new fragmented governance landscape.

"It is not like that there is a big and strong state which has a lot of analysis power. It has not been like that. They [the Ministry of the Environment] started by saying we have 100,000 DKK, can we create a

project if you [the municipalities] pay yourselves? It has been like that, we have paid ourselves. So in that way it [the state] has not been the strongest in terms of resources. There have been two members of staff who barely had time. It has been like that. It makes us perhaps also a bit equal. In that way, it has been highly cooperative, because we have coughed up ourselves.” (Interview, EHP, 2010, author’s translation)

The organisation of the strategy-making process can roughly be divided into two levels; the political decision-makers and the planners (see figure 6.1). The political decision-makers were the Minister of the Environment, the chairman of Region Zealand and the municipal mayors. The political decision-makers were somewhat detached from the process. They met at key points in the process such as in the beginning and in the end or when other key decisions had to be made. The planning level consisted of a coordination group and a professional forum. The coordination group consisted of 8 planners from four municipalities, Region Zealand, the Danish Transport Authority, the national environment centre Roskilde, and the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning. The coordination group was in charge of pulling together the different strings in the process and communicating with the politicians and the following group. The daily work in the project was carried out by a project secretariat, run by two planners from the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning. On the contrary to the twin project in Eastern Jutland, it was decided by the partners in the process to place the overall responsibility for the common process in the central administration of the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning. It was believed that the agency would be able to play a freer or more objective role, as it was not involved directly in supervising the municipal planning (Interview, ATL, 2009).

The professional forum consisted of planners from the various participating organisations. One person from each organisation had been appointed as contact person and was responsible for coordinating the professional input from their backing. The planning process was based around monthly meetings in the professional forum where planners met to coordinate the work of the two appointed working groups, focusing on spatial planning and transport planning related issues, respectively, or discuss presentations from the private consultants hired to support the process (Ministry of the Environment, 2008g). The planning process remained rather administrative and professional, as a lot of emphasis was put on reducing the dialogue to professional discussions based on as ‘objective’ analyses as possible. This

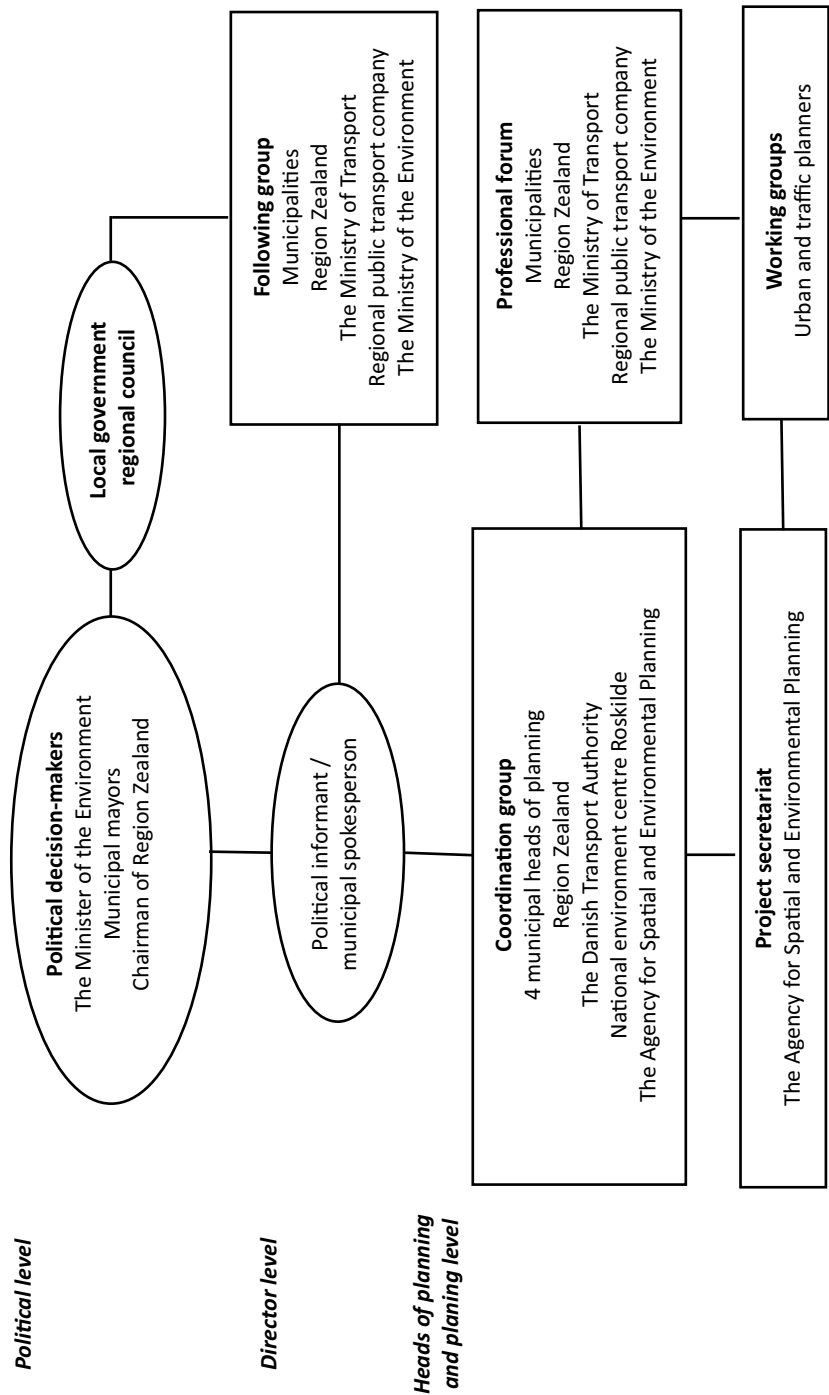


Figure 6.1: The organisational structure of the strategic spatial planning process in Region Zealand (Developed from Ministry of the Environment, 2008g)

was particularly significant in the preparation of the spatial framework.

On the side of the process, a following group was created consisting of municipal and technical directors from the municipalities and Region Zealand, together with representatives from the Ministry of Transport, the regional public transport company, and the Ministry of the Environment (Ministry of the Environment, 2008g). The following group was not involved directly in the project, but was kept informed about the progress of the process through meetings held in the auspices of the local government regional council. The communication between the local government regional council and the coordination group took mainly place through a municipal member of the coordination group, who on one hand, played the role as the politicians' informant, and on the other hand, acted as the municipalities' spokesperson in discussions with the Ministry of the Environment. In this way, the local government regional council acted as an important political platform for discussions on key issues in the strategy-making process, providing political legitimacy for the strategy-making process.¹

PREPARING THE SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

The strategy-making process in Region Zealand was kicked off in August 2008 (Ministry of the Environment, 2008f). In the first phase of the process, the aim was to develop an overview over Region Zealand's spatial structure and current development trends within themes such as demography, housing, and commuting. The analyses were presented in January 2009 in a report, entitled *'Zealand – a regional overview'* (Ministry of the Environment, 2009a). In the next step, a consultant was hired to carry out interviews with all municipal mayors. Based on these interviews, two scenarios suggesting the region's urban development towards 2030 were prepared (see plate 7) (Ministry of the Environment, 2009b). One scenario presented the projection of the current development trends in the region (the 0-scenario), while the other scenario presented a sustainable alternative assuming 1) relocation of urban development towards the major towns and especially areas with high station proximity, 2) increased housing density, and 3) increased speed on the railway (Ministry of the Environment, 2009b).

The two scenarios were presented to the politicians at a conference in June 2009. The politicians believed that the two scenarios looked too much alike, and they asked the coordination group to work on a sustainable scenario that really could make a

difference. A member of the coordination group explained how the group perhaps had taken a too careful approach in the initial phase, being too concerned with the spatial politics of strategy-making:

“In the coordination [...] you think to a large extent about what is possible, and this is impossible, and some of these discussions we have had them already. There you have to be careful about not to delimit yourself too much, you have to be sure that you are right and not shoot something down in advance. At the first minister conference, the politicians actually said: ‘provoke us some more, show us a picture which makes a difference’. The coordination group has probably been too concerned about getting all to agree. This has meant that some might say that there is not much in this. Show us something with politics in that you can say yes or no to. If it is a bit difficult to see the difference between the two pictures, then it doesn’t matter. They [the politicians] don’t want that either. I almost believe you have been too careful.” (Interview, EHP, 2010, author’s translation)

In the autumn 2009, the work began on preparing a spatial framework based on the scenario for sustainable urban development. A proposal for the spatial framework, entitled the ‘*Structure Picture 2030*’ (Ministry of the Environment, 2010a), and a strategic environmental assessment (Ministry of the Environment, 2010c) were presented and approved at a political conference in March 2010. At the same time, an idea catalogue of best practice examples of sustainable urban development was published as inspiration for the municipal planning (Ministry of the Environment, 2010b). On the contrary to the strategy-making process in Eastern Jutland, the ministry decided that the spatial framework for Region Zealand required a strategic environmental assessment. Furthermore, the level of detail in the framework and its potential significance for the municipal planning meant that a public hearing was required. The framework was sent into public hearing until the beginning of June 2010.

The spatial framework suggested concentrating future urban development towards the major towns in the region connected by the national and regional railway network. According to the strategic environmental assessment this would result in a yearly reduction of CO₂-emissions by 46,000 tons (Ministry of the Environment, 2010c). The framework proposed a hierarchy of towns from A to D based on each town’s ‘transport effectiveness’ (see box 6.2 and plate 8). The concept of ‘transport

Box 6.2: Hierarchy of transport effective towns in Region Zealand (Ministry of the Environment, 2010a, pp.10-12)

A-towns: > 10,000 inhabitants + well-connected to national railway network
B- towns: 4,000 - 15,000 inhabitants + good or medium connections to national and regional railway network
C-towns: 2,000 - 6,500 inhabitants + connected by local and regional railways*
D-towns: < 2,000 inhabitants + connected by local and regional railways

*The C-town category includes also the towns of Skælskør, Stege and Præstø which are not connected to the railway network

effectiveness’ was invented as an objective and analytical measure for dividing towns into categories depending on their size, access to workplaces, connectivity to the railway network, and coverage of regional bus service (Ministry of the Environment, 2010a). The framework prescribed how future urban development predominantly should take place in towns of either A or B status, urban development in C-towns should be carefully considered, whilst D-towns were subject to a no-growth status. The framework suggested only concentrating urban development within municipal boundaries, preventing municipalities from ‘stealing’ citizens from each other in the future scenario.

The spatial framework was based on objective and analytical measures in order to keep the spatial politics of strategy-making outside the exercise.² However, as box 6.2 illustrates the framework was flexible enough to accommodate the necessary adjustments to build political legitimacy. As a municipal head of planning explained, the spatial framework was not entirely based on math and science:

“Yes, it is also characterised by that everybody has got something, so it is not pure math and science, I believe. It is fine with the level of A and B (towns) you have agreed on here, then everybody has some [towns in this category]. [...] Then you could maybe argue that the even more sustainable [scenario], it should have even more emphasis on a few points, maybe in close proximity to the Capital Area. You did not want that, and you could not get these [municipalities] down here [at Southern Zealand] in on that. You can of course not shut down the rest of Zealand. So it has also had to be a political sustainable picture.”
(Interview, EHP, 2010, author’s translation)

The B-category ensured that all municipalities would have either an A- or B-town, whilst allowing larger municipalities nominate an A- and B-town. The latter was particularly important for newly merged municipalities containing several former main towns, as proposing centralisation of urban development towards only one of these towns was expected to be a controversial local political issue. The three towns of Skælskør, Stege and Præstø were allowed C-status, although they are not connected to the railway network. It was argued that the towns due to their considerable size play an important role in their respective municipalities in terms of offering public services and workplaces, and in addition the towns are fairly accessible by regional bus service. A municipal planner from a municipality containing two of these towns explained how the alternative of ‘closing down’ the towns was not a political viable option: “in a future perspective, you don’t close down two well-functioning old market towns, you just don’t” (Interview, AV, 2010, author’s translation) (see chapter 8). A similar influence of spatial politics can be detected in the D-category, where no prioritisation were done between the six small towns located at the railway line between Holbæk and Nykøbing Sjælland in the north western part of Zealand (see plate 8). The concern was here that prioritising some D-towns over others would encourage the Ministry of Transport to close down train stations in low priority towns (Interview, AV, 2010).

In practice the strategy-making process ended with the political conference in March 2010. The Ministry of the Environment had already indicated that it did not want to continue the process, and that it now was up to the region and the municipalities to decide how or if the process was to continue. The final version of the *‘Structure Picture 2030’* was published in August 2010 with only minor revisions.

UNRESOLVED TENSIONS AND FUTURE COOPERATION IN REGION ZEALAND

All partners were generally satisfied with the strategy-making process and felt that they had been part of an important process of developing a more sustainable urban region. A common understanding of the need for an overall spatial framework was built, which led the participants to promote a self-regulatory planning perspective. It was highlighted how the informal and voluntary characteristics of the process allowed for greater flexibility and creativity in the process.

"It has been a good process. It has been an incredible good project. Well, I believe it is the first time on Zealand that you have succeeded in getting all levels to speak to each other and actually set up some reasonable aims. [...] I believe that the early clarification of that this was not binding created the possibility for thinking more out of the box than traditionally. We have absolutely had the possibility to do that." (Interview, BM, 2010, author's translation)

It was also noted how the strategy-making process had helped building up a professional network and relationships across municipalities and levels of government. A municipal head of planning explained how he now had a more friendly tone with the ministry planners, where things could be said 'off the record' (Interview, EHP, 2010). On the downside, the process had been very intensive with a long series of meetings and workshops adding onto the planners' daily work in a public institution. The participants had often to prioritise between what to get involved in, as it was impossible to follow everything. A municipal member of the coordination group stressed how he barely could cope with the hard cadence of meetings, and that he would have liked to see a more efficient process.

"It is probably because the state did not want to steamroller the process and everybody had to be involved, and you put a lot of emphasis on that, and that might have been wise. [...] I believe that you have almost been too much concerned with getting everybody involved, and it had to be a common product, rather than it had to be a good product, fast and efficient." (Interview, EHP, 2010, author's translation)

The aim of the strategy-making process had also been to prepare a model for how the partners in the future could collaborate on promoting sustainable urban development. As highlighted earlier, the region and municipalities had a 'transport infrastructure wish list' which they were eager to discuss the realisation of together with the Ministry of Transport. The municipalities had envisioned that they, by concentrating future urban development around railway stations as prescribed in the spatial framework, would be entitled to state investments in the public transport system in terms of improved services, new stations or new connections. However, the Ministry of Transport had a different view of what the aim of the process was. The Danish Government's Green Transport Policy had in January 2009 allocated substantial investments in transport infrastructure to Region Zealand.³ The Ministry of Transport was therefore more

interested in discussing how the region's future urban development could support these investments rather than discussing new investments.

"There has been a lot of focus from the municipalities that they of course would like as good a service as possible and as good infrastructure as possible. It is what the municipalities' and the region's endeavours are all about, to attract state investments to the local area. There is no secret in that. And this project, partly, it is a voluntary project, so nobody of the partners can promise anything. On one hand, the municipalities have not been able to promise that we will build close to the stations. There is a declaration of intent. And on the other hand, the state has not been able to promise anything on the infrastructure side. The case was that when the project started, we had just had the great round of the latest investment plan [the government's Green Transport Policy], in which there were quite a lot of projects in Region Zealand. [...] So you might say that there were some quite substantial state investments as a starting point in the area of Region Zealand, and there is no doubt about that the point of departure from the state has been that these are the frames so far, and it is these frames that the urban development in Zealand has to take place within. Or put more precisely, it is the frames or the infrastructures that the urban development in Zealand must support. Now the state invests a relatively large two-digit billion figure in infrastructure in Zealand, then the urban development should preferably support the infrastructure, the investments which are taking place in infrastructure. It is clear that this is the point of departure. The point of departure has not been that now the Danish Transport Authority has to be involved in a lot of new projects about new stations for example. It is not something we will dismiss, it cannot be dismissed that it would be a possibility, but it has not been the underlying point of departure that we now have to make a lot of new urban development nodes. The point of departure has been that now these investments must first and foremost be supported by urban development."

(Interview, JJ, 2010, author's translation)

As a consequence, the ministry transport planners participating in the process did not have a mandate to discuss further investments.⁴ Instead, the transport planners took an educational role, explaining the conditions under which new railway stations

or increased services in terms of stops and speed would be considered feasible by the Ministry of Transport. This was seen by the municipalities as a lack of commitment to the process and destructive for the 'out of box' thinking that generally characterised the strategy-making process.

"Now I began by praising the Danish Transport Authority for their part in this, but perhaps it has also been a bit destructive for the discussions, that everything all the time was brushed aside with populations prognoses, population base and one thing or the other, well, why it was impossible all the time. But it has also been nice instead of [the municipalities] suggesting all kinds of things." (Interview, BM, 2010, author's translation)

This unresolved tension meant that the municipalities did not want to conform to the spatial framework, which remained informal and voluntary. In addition, the region and the municipalities decided to include their own suggestions for future investments in transport infrastructure in the '*Structure Picture 2030*' based on their common transport policy produced in 2008.

As it remains voluntary for the municipalities to implement the spatial framework in the municipal planning, the leverage of the '*Structure Picture 2030*' seems to depend on the ownership created through the process among the municipal planners and in the local government regional council. As the centralisation policies in the spatial framework are likely to be subject to local political contestation, the leverage of the spatial strategy might be limited. Seen from a planning perspective solely, a national planning directive might have been the preferred model.

"So therefore it would be nice, and we would of course curse it, if there came a national planning directive, which said this is how it should be done. It would be perceived as an intervention. What I am trying to say is that the mayors have nodded to this [the framework] in the auspices of the local government regional council, but it will probably not be politically processed in the municipality, the municipal council, where you say this is what we would like to do forward. I do not believe that you would support it, because it would result in huge discussions, which you would find it difficult to agree on." (Interview, BM, 2010, author's translation)

CONCLUSION

The spatial strategy-making process in Region Zealand has been successful in terms of bringing three planning levels and two policy sectors together in discussions of how to bridge transport planning and urban development planning in order to promote a more sustainable urban region. Despite contested planning rationalities and diverging motives for entering the process, the partners managed to build consensus on an overall spatial framework, suggesting concentration of future urban development towards the main towns in the region. In this regard, the process has made it a step further than the strategy-making process in Eastern Jutland. A number of factors were significant for this achievement. First, the process of preparing the spatial framework benefitted from a rational and objective approach, aiming at removing the spatial politics of strategy-making from the process, whilst still being flexible enough to allow the adjustments required to build political legitimacy. Second, the adjustment of the scale of the process allowed close connections to the local government regional council, which provided the necessary political legitimacy to the process. Third, conforming to the spatial framework remained voluntary.

Whether the spatial framework will have any impact on spatial planning across scales in the future remains to be seen. The implementation of the framework at the municipal level might meet tough resistance in the complex political climate of the newly merged municipalities. It is likely that the spatial logic of concentrating future urban development towards the main municipal town, whilst sentencing the rest of the municipality to a no growth status and possible decline, would be seen as a controversial spatial policy. Furthermore, it remains to be seen whether and how strategic spatial planning at the scale of Region Zealand might continue in the future. To what extent will the '*Structure Picture 2030*' be acknowledged in the '*Finger Plan 2012*'? Are we moving towards a more coherent spatial framework for the entire island of Zealand, or will the frameworks be treated separate entities?

NOTES

- 1 In chapter 9, I discuss how the synergy between the spatial strategy-making process and the local government regional council played an important role in building political legitimacy for the process.
- 2 In chapter 8, I discuss how these attempts to blur the spatial politics of strategy-making through technicality and objectivity can be understood as depoliticisation of strategic spatial planning.

- 3 For a complete list of the government's investments in transport infrastructure in Region Zealand see Ministry of the Environment (2010a, p.17).
- 4 In chapter 9, I discuss how spatial strategy-making in soft spaces tends to underestimate the significance of formal planning structures as key decision-making arenas.

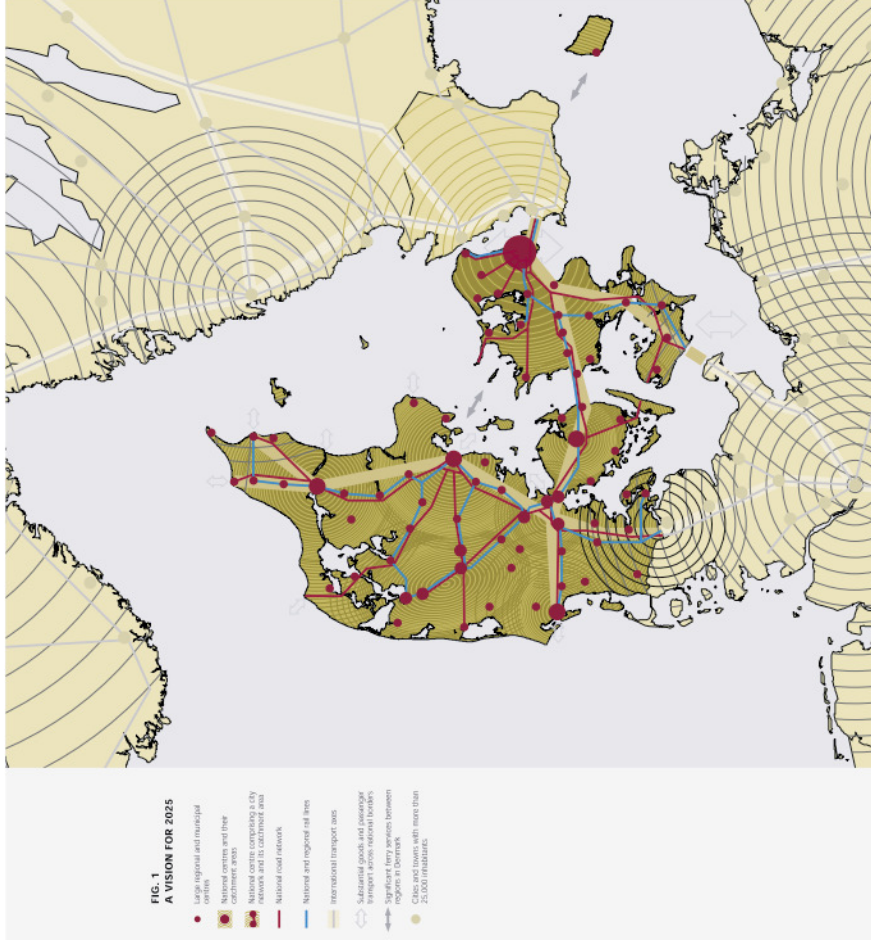


Plate 1: National spatial policy map from 2000 (Ministry of the Environment and Energy, 2000, p.15)

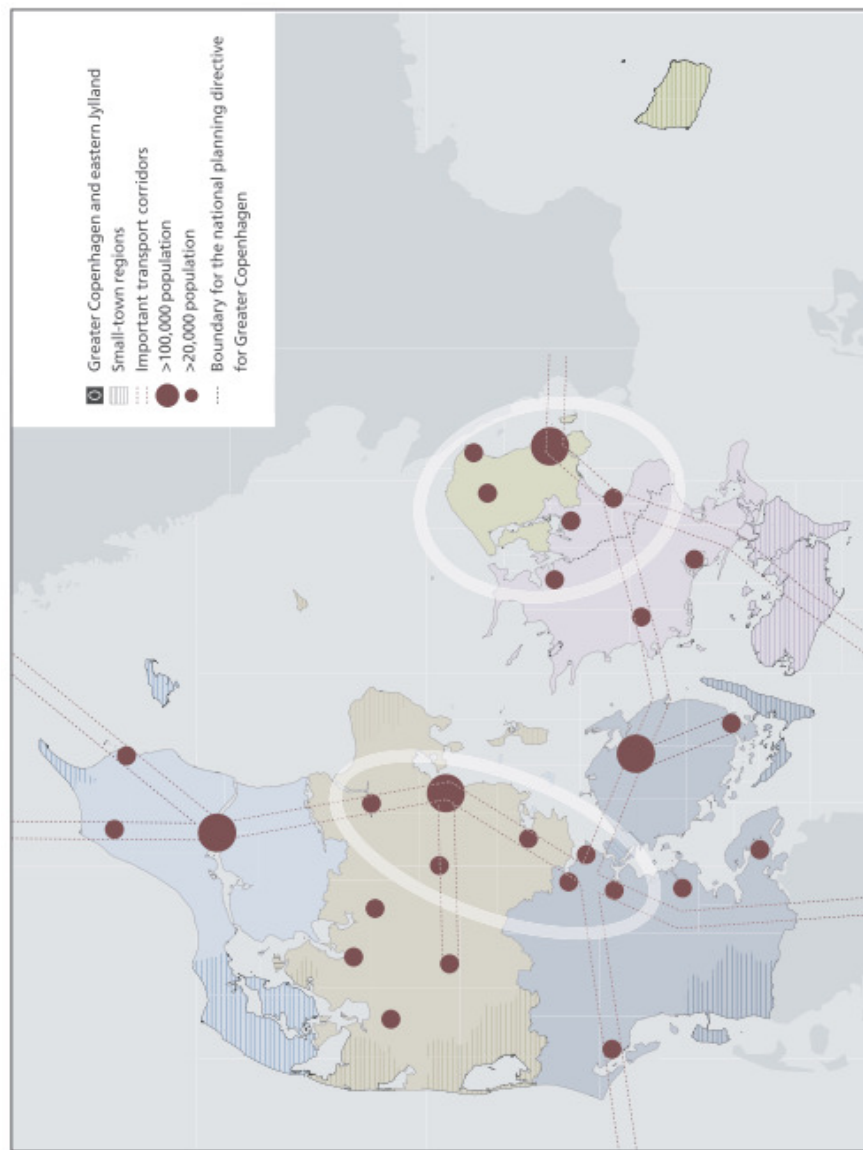


Plate 2: The 'New Map of Denmark' from 2006 (Ministry of the Environment, 2006, p.15)

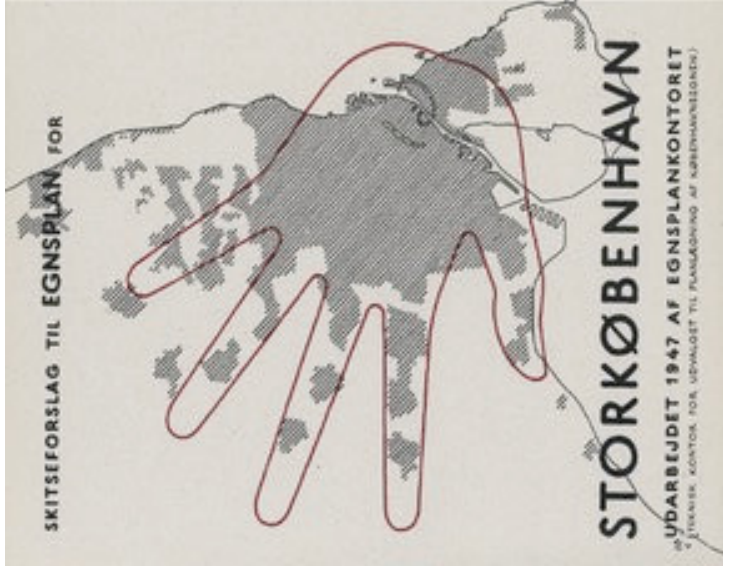
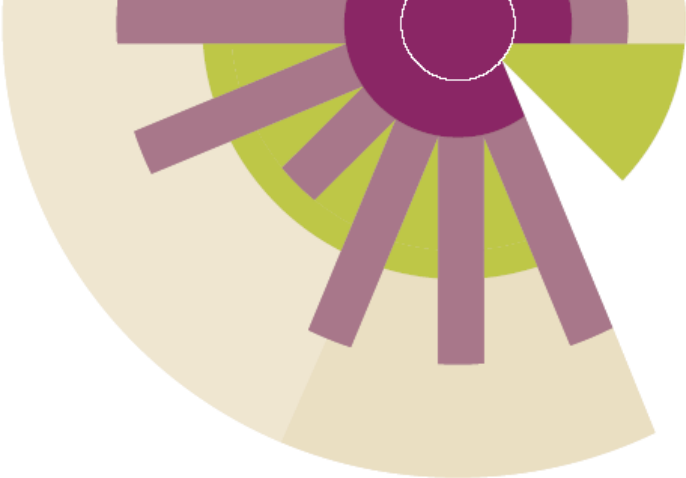
<p>The 'Finger Plan' 1947</p>	<p>The 'Finger Plan 2007'</p>
	

Plate 3: To the left: The 'Finger Plan' from 1947 (Regional Planning Office, 1947, front page). To the right: The 'Finger Plan 2007' (Ministry of the Environment, 2007a, p.15)

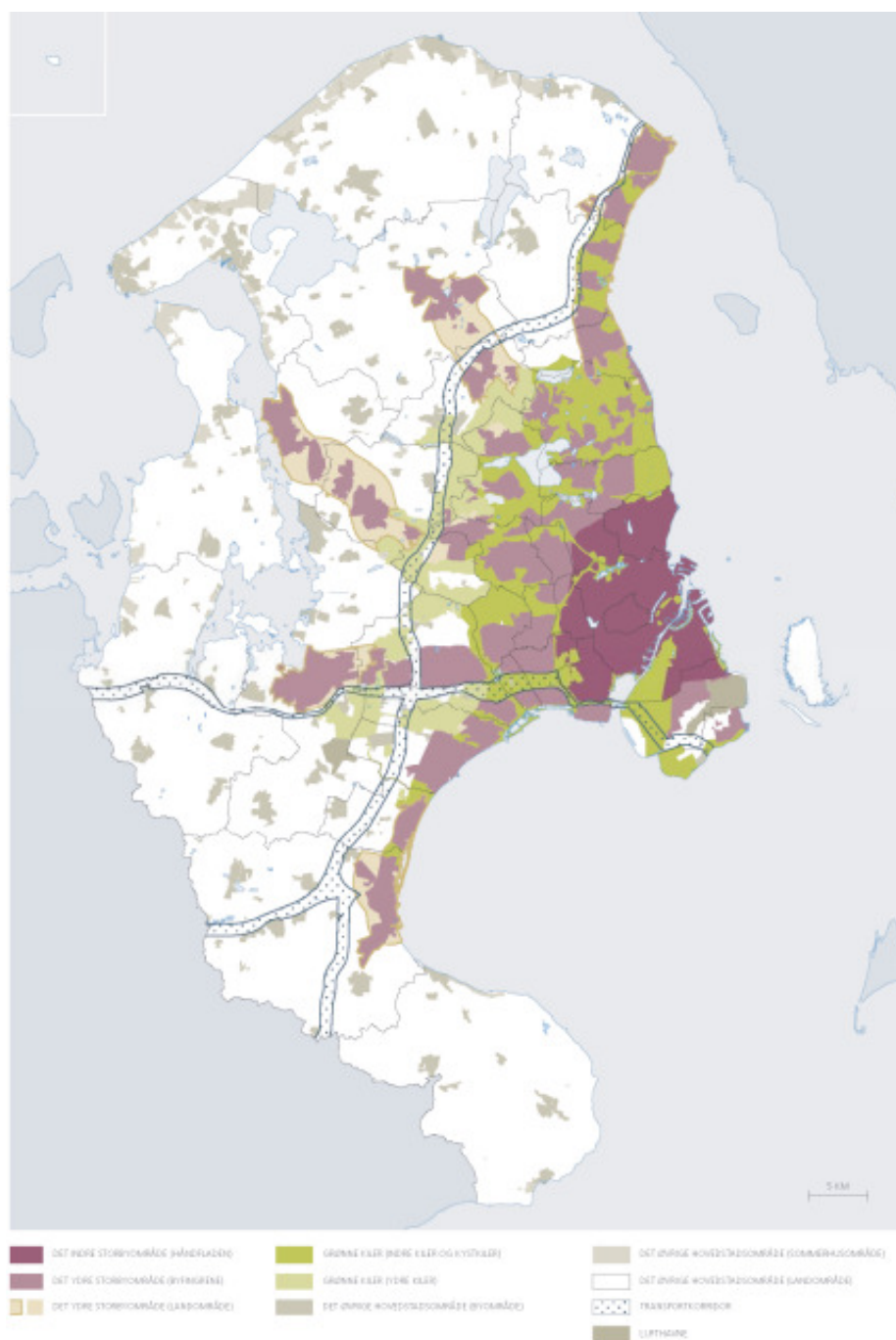


Plate 4: The four areas in the 'Finger Plan 2007' (Ministry of the Environment, 2007, p.16)

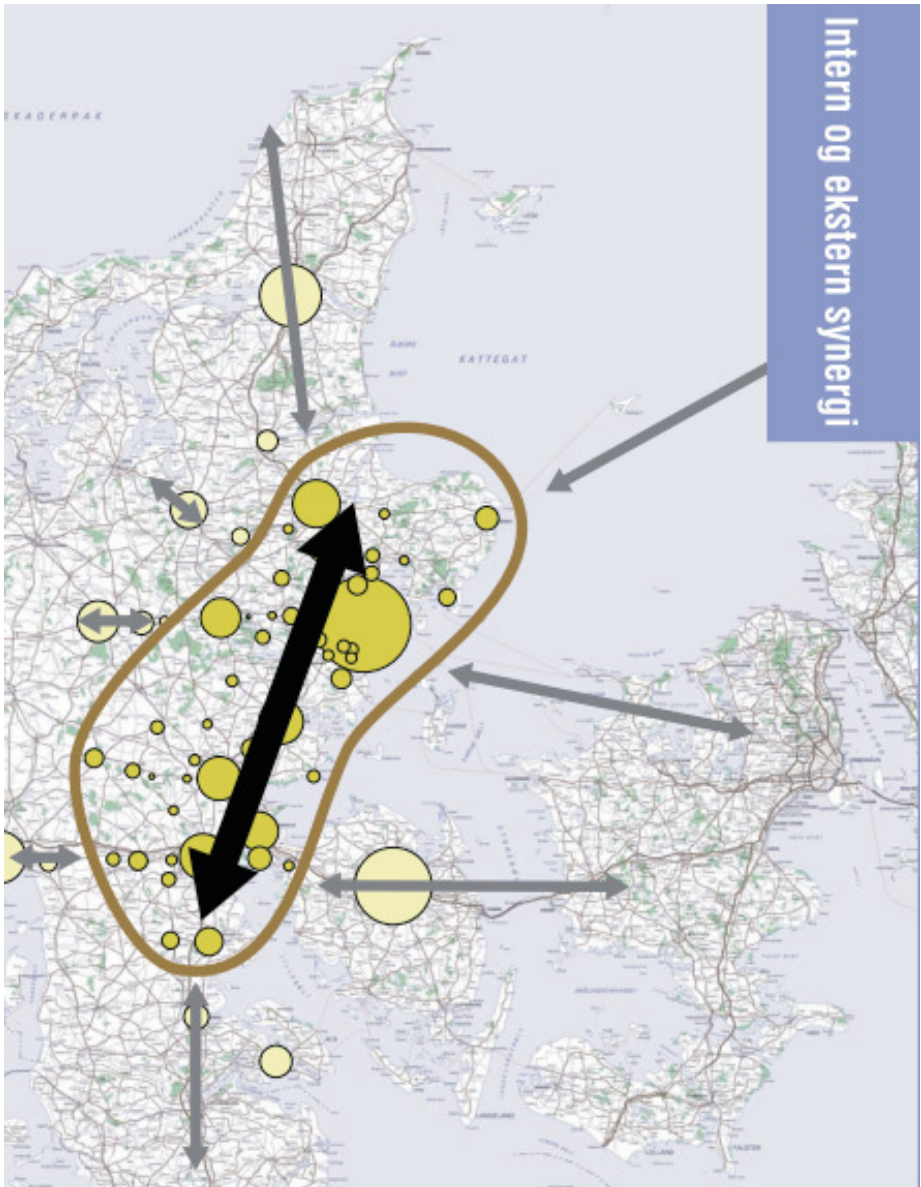


Plate 5: Potential internal and external synergies in Eastern Jutland (Ministry of the Environment, 2008e, p.8)

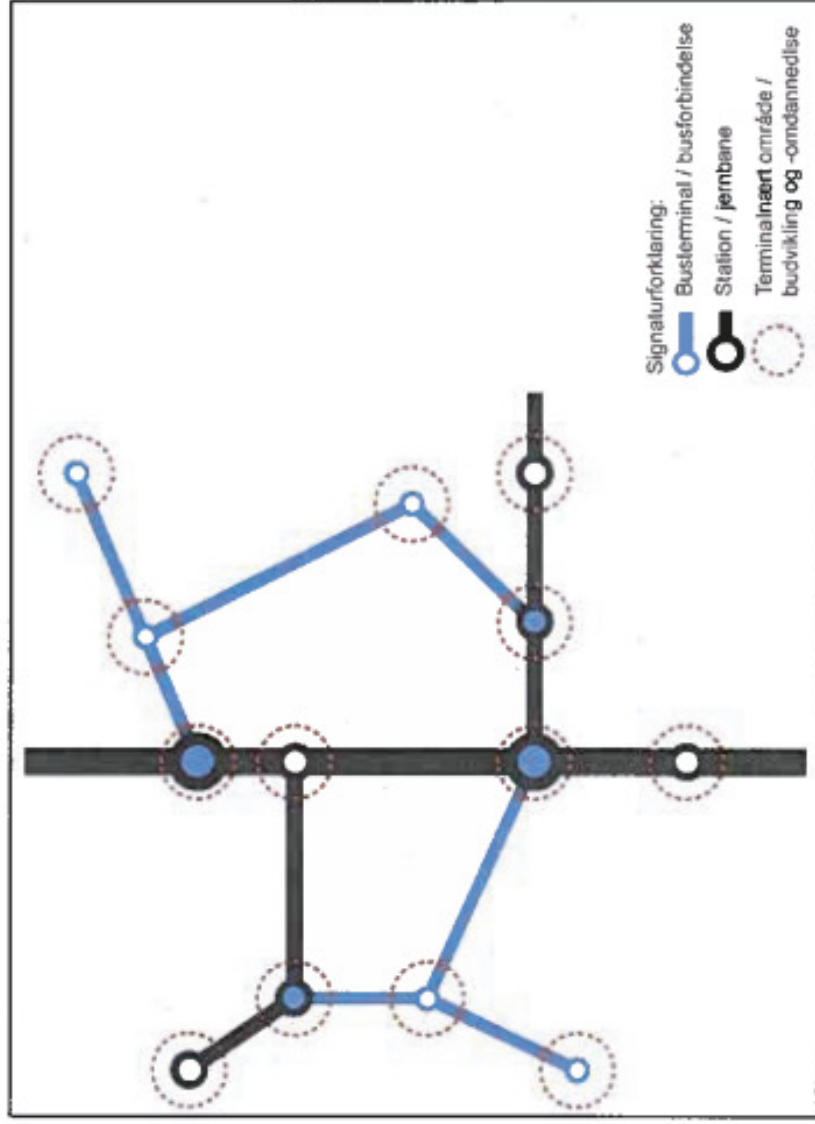


Plate 6: The Eastern Jutland principle of concentrating urban development around the nodes in the public transportation system (Ministry of the Environment, 2010d, p.9)

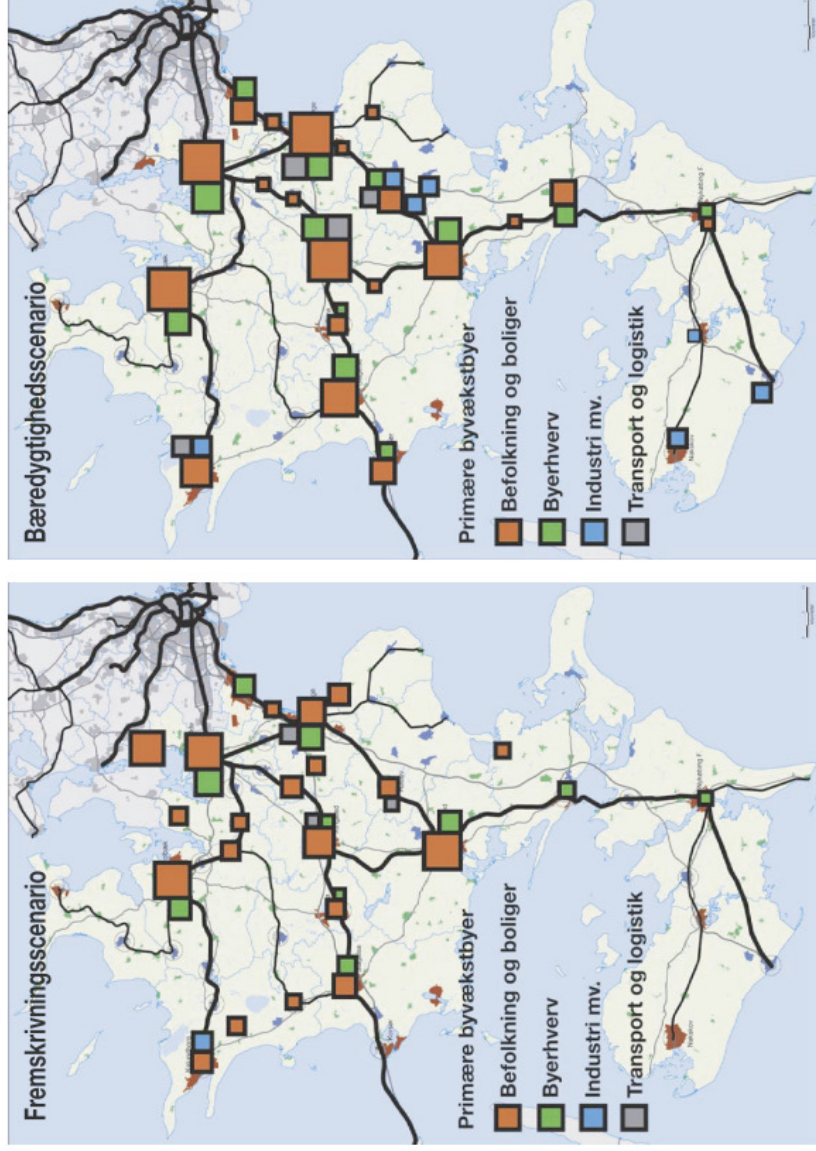


Plate 7: Two scenarios for urban development in Region Zealand towards 2030. The scenario to the left presents the 0-alternative (fremskrivningsscenario). The scenario to the right presents the sustainable alternative (bæredygtighedsscenario) (Ministry of the Environment, 2009b, p.3).

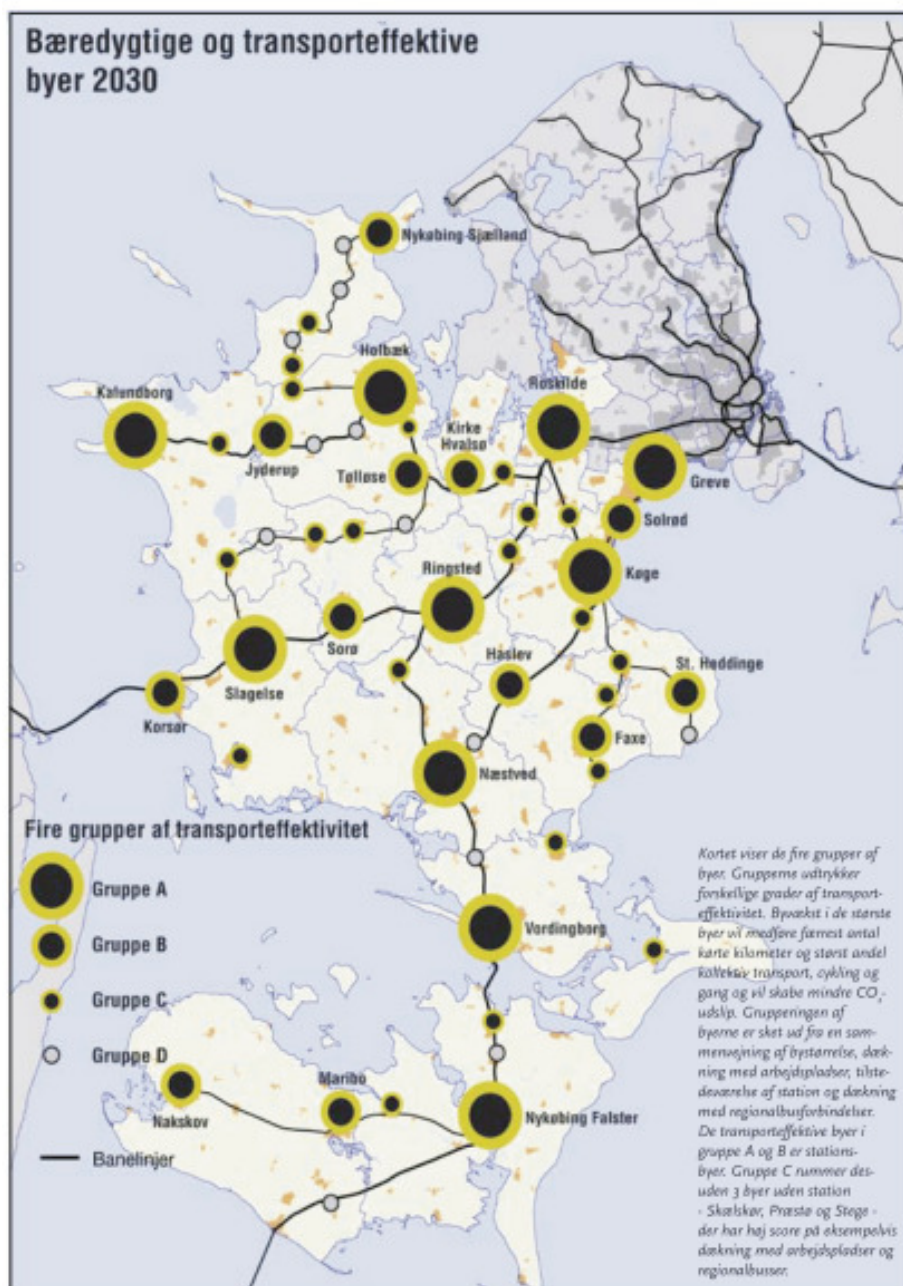


Plate 8: The spatial structure of sustainable and transport effective towns in Region Zealand 2030 (Ministry of the Environment, 2010a, p.8).

PART C

JOURNAL PAPERS

STRATEGIC PLANNING IN TRANSITION: CONTESTED RATIONALITIES AND SPATIAL LOGICS IN 21ST CENTURY DANISH PLANNING EXPERIMENTS

This paper was submitted to European Planning Studies in October 2010, resubmitted in April 2011, and accepted in its current form in June 2011. An early draft of the paper was presented at the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) 24th annual AESOP conference in Helsinki in 2010. This paper is co-authored by Tim Richardson (Department of Development and Planning, Aalborg University). The notes are not part of the original paper, but have added for the purpose of linking the paper to other parts of the PhD thesis.

ABSTRACT

In this paper, we analyse how contested transitions in planning rationalities and spatial logics have shaped the processes and outputs of recent episodes of Danish 'strategic spatial planning'. The practice of 'strategic spatial planning' in Denmark has undergone a concerted reorientation in the recent years as a consequence of an emerging neoliberal agenda promoting a growth-oriented planning approach emphasising a new spatial logic of growth centres in the major cities and urban regions. The analysis, of the three planning episodes, at different subnational scales, highlights how this new style of 'strategic spatial planning' with its associated spatial logics is continuously challenged by a persistent regulatory, top-down rationality of 'strategic spatial planning', rooted in spatial Keynesianism, which has long characterised the Danish approach. The findings reveal the emergence of a particularly Danish approach, retaining strong regulatory aspects. However, this approach does not sit easily within the current neoliberal political climate, raising concerns of an emerging crisis of 'strategic spatial planning'.

INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1990s, planning practice has experienced a renewed interest in 'strategic spatial planning', which has been the focus of a rich vein in the planning literature, grounded in analysis of various case studies of strategic spatial planning at different scales (e.g. Albrechts, 1998, 2006; Albrechts et al., 2001; Albrechts et al., 2003; Balducci, 2003; Balducci et al., 2011; Healey, 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2008; Healey et al., 1997; Kunzmann, 1996, 2001). In line with this revival, strategic spatial planning in Denmark has in recent years undergone a reorientation towards more collaborative and experimental forms of planning. This shift has been shaped by twin struggles, which have centred on both the substance and the procedure of planning. At stake have been both the translation of a neoliberal conception of spatial organisation into particular spatial planning logics, and more fundamentally the very meaning and nature of the enterprise of 'strategic spatial planning' in Denmark.

The first, substantive, struggle is manifested in the reframing of 'strategic spatial planning' within the Danish state spatial project, played out between Keynesian and neoliberal planning rationalities. 21st century Danish 'strategic spatial planning' is influenced by a neoliberal growth-oriented planning approach which emphasises a new spatial logic of growth centres in the major cities and urban regions. This emergent planning rationality disrupts the longstanding spatial logic of spatial Keynesianism (Brenner, 2004b), focusing on equalisation, which has dominated Danish 'strategic spatial planning' for decades. The second, procedural, struggle is manifested in recent Danish planning experiments which can be said to be in the spirit of the turn towards a 'revival of strategic spatial planning' (Albrechts, 2004; Healey, 2007; Healey et al., 1997; Salet & Faludi, 2000) at the transnational, national and subnational scales in Europe since the beginning of the 1990s. In different ways, then, these experiments have unsettled Denmark's strong tradition of rational comprehensive planning.

By the mid-2000s across Europe, 'strategic spatial planning' was experiencing difficulties. A crisis of 'strategic spatial planning' seemed to be emerging, furthered by a strengthening neoliberal political climate. Questions were raised about the efficacy of 'strategic spatial planning' (Cerreta et al., 2010) and planning theorists found it difficult to find truly successful cases (Albrechts, 2006; Albrechts et al., 2003). This led planning theorists to question the normative assumptions of 'strategic spatial planning' (Newman, 2008) and its elusive characteristics (Haughton et al., 2010). It was also increasingly realised that 'strategic spatial planning' experiments might be used to promote neoliberal urban and regional development models (Cerreta et al., 2010; Haughton et al., 2010).

How planning practice and the planning literature will respond to this emerging crisis remains currently uncertain. Allmendinger & Haughton (2009b) argue, from a UK context, that the future of 'strategic spatial planning' as a normative project is in doubt. The planning literature is beginning to notice how the increasing neoliberal political climate has substantially changed the nature of 'strategic spatial planning'. Van den Broeck (2008), for example, illustrates how 'strategic spatial planning' in Flanders is turned into exercises of 'neutral' process management, seriously affecting planning as a collective action. Murray & Neill (2011) question whether the German spatial logic of balanced development simply has been turned into a neoliberal fig leaf acting as policy cover for more pragmatic accommodations in harsh times. Such evidence suggests that, at the least, 'strategic spatial planning' is entering a turbulent period – and perhaps moving from revival towards crisis. Planning is becoming a target for political change in which the very meaning and nature of the enterprise of 'strategic spatial planning' is being questioned.

In this paper, then, we stress the importance of taking into account the political and institutional context when evaluating contemporary 'strategic spatial planning' experiments.¹ We are interested in how struggles between contested planning rationalities, and substantive spatial logics, are being played out in practice, at the moment of a potential watershed between a renewed interest in and a crisis of 'strategic spatial planning'. Our aim is to examine how particular planning rationalities and spatial logics, and the dynamics between them, shape the practice of 21st century 'strategic spatial planning', through analysis of recent practice in Denmark. This is done through case studies of three 'strategic spatial planning' experiments at subnational scales in Denmark, initiated by the Danish Ministry of the Environment in response to changing spatial and governmental conditions (Ministry of the Environment, 2006). The cases were selected not only because they represent the most recent approaches to 'strategic spatial planning' in Denmark, but also because they appeared to be underpinned by substantially different planning rationalities, and so provided good opportunities to study the dynamics of shifting and contested rationalities. In the Greater Copenhagen Area, where a strong tradition for 'strategic spatial planning' has existed at the subnational scale since the first 'Finger Plan' was prepared in 1947, the Ministry of the Environment has prepared a national planning directive (Ministry of the Environment, 2007a) through a topdown planning process. In the Eastern Jutland Region and Region Zealand, both without any notable tradition for 'strategic spatial planning' at subnational scales, the Ministry of the Environment has initiated informal and voluntary dialogue-based spatial strategy-making processes with the

municipalities in each urban region. The case studies are informed by analysis of key planning documents, and by interviews with current and former ministry and municipal planners, who have participated in the three planning processes, as well as others who are involved in 'strategic spatial planning' in Denmark.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, we review the evolution of the concept of 'strategic spatial planning' over the last 50 years, and place this discussion in a Danish context. Next an analytical framework is presented, which places a focus on planning rationalities and spatial logics in contemporary planning practice. Following this, the three case studies of 'strategic spatial planning' are presented. Finally, a synthesis of the cases provides an overview of the current state of Danish 'strategic spatial planning', which leads to reflections on possible future paths for development of practice.

THE EVOLUTION OF 'STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING' IN DENMARK

In this section, we review the evolution of 'strategic spatial planning' and the different planning rationalities which have underpinned the different 'stages' of spatial planning the last 50 years. In particular, we place this discussion in a Danish context which has been characterised by a strong social welfarist planning approach combined with a comprehensive planning system.

In this paper, 'strategic spatial planning' refers to the processes of spatial strategy-making at the subnational and national scales in Denmark. The term is placed in inverted commas to highlight that Danish planning practice does not necessarily correspond with wider European trends or theorisations in the literature referring to the new 'strategic spatial planning'. In fact one of the arguments presented in this paper is that 'strategic spatial planning' in practice should be understood as a field of contested planning rationalities and spatial logics. In this way, this paper seeks to present a more nuanced picture of 'strategic spatial planning' by focusing on the presence and nature of these embedded struggles.²

FROM SPATIAL KEYNESIANISM TO COMPETITIVE SPATIAL LOGICS

Understandings of the spatiality of the state have undergone a number of transformations since the mid-20th century. State spatial strategies have typically developed from focusing on expanding the welfare state by promoting equal

development across the state territory, to neoliberal attempts to create a competitive state by generating investments into major cities and urban regions. This change has been characterised as a change from spatial Keynesianism to globalisation strategies (Brenner, 2004b). Although general trends in spatial restructuring can be identified, Brenner (2004b) stresses that the organisation of space best can be understood as a multilayered territorial mosaic consisting of political geographies established through time. The remaking of territory is therefore limited by the geographical configurations inherited from the past, which put constraints upon future development (Brenner, 2004b).

In Denmark the idea of spatial Keynesianism, and in particular the idea of equal development across the entire country, has played an important part in Danish 'strategic spatial planning'. The first discussions on national 'strategic spatial planning' can be traced back to the 1960s where discussions on the spatial organisation of urban development at the national scale emerged. Central to this discussion was the location of the expected future growth. Several models were drawn which either focused on decentralisation or centralisation of the expected future urban development. The preferred model by the state (also known as the big H) proposed centralisation of urban development around the existing major cities supported by investments in transport infrastructures (Gaardmand, 1993). However, the objective of equal development across the entire Danish territory remained central to the development of the modern Danish planning system throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The objective of equal development was implemented through the principle of a hierarchy of cities and towns inspired by the German central place theory (Christaller, 1966). During the 1980s national spatial policies focused on upgrading peripheral cities to national centres and regional centres which would ensure the population across the entire country access to a minimum of public and private services.

By the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, Danish national spatial planning was linked to growth policies. The capital city Copenhagen had suffered from years of spatial policies aiming at equalisation. The aim was now to turn Copenhagen into a Nordic growth centre by, among others things, building a bridge across Øresund, developing the new urban district of Ørestad on the island of Amager close to the international airport, and connecting Ørestad to the centre of Copenhagen with Denmark's first metro line. In other words, the aim was to develop the Øresund Region. The key assumption behind these development projects was that a reinforced Copenhagen would benefit the entire country (Jørgensen et al., 1997; Ministry of the Environment, 1997). This new Copenhagen-centric focus was

legitimised by changes in the planning act in 1992, where the objective of national spatial planning was changed from focusing on equal development to promoting appropriate development. Promoting Copenhagen as an international metropolis was regarded as Denmark's only chance to survive in a more and more globalised society (Ministry of the Environment, 1992). The changes we now see in Danish 'strategic spatial planning' towards centralisation of socio-economic activity and differentiated spatial strategies have been under way since the beginning of the 1990s, with globalisation as the main driving force.³

FROM PHYSICAL PLANNING TO SPATIAL POLICY-MAKING

The rationality of 'strategic spatial planning' has likewise changed substantially since the mid-20th century. Spatial planning was in the mid-20th century characterised by a strong state and a clear separation between the public and private sector. Spatial planning was carried out by bureaucrats in public institutions based on a positivistic planning rationality. This planning rationality came under heavy pressure in the 1980s as a neoliberal political climate gained support. Planning was largely reduced to ad hoc project planning without any overall coherent spatial policies. The state's role was reduced from provider to enabler of development (Healey et al., 1997), cf. demise of spatial Keynesianism in the previous section. The 1990s were characterised by a 'revival of strategic spatial planning', as experienced elsewhere in Europe (Albrechts, 2004; Healey, 2007; Healey et al., 1997; Salet & Faludi, 2000), which highlighted 'strategic spatial planning' as a social process carried out by a range of different actors through collaborative and consensus-seeking planning processes (Healey, 1997, 2007; Healey et al., 1997; Innes, 1996). Emphasis was put on generating mobilising force for framing discourses rather than preparation of plans (Healey, 2007).

The 'Finger Plan' for the Greater Copenhagen Area from 1947 (Regional Planning Office, 1947) is a classic example of the positivistic⁴ planning rationality which characterised spatial planning in the mid-20th century. The success criterion of the plan lies in the degree to which society resembles the plan. The spatial logic behind the plan is a hand with spread fingers where urban development is allowed in the paw and along the fingers supported by public transportation infrastructures, whilst preserving the web between the fingers as recreational green areas. The spatial logic of the fingers has been such a strong metaphor for urban development in the Greater Copenhagen Area that it still today constitutes the overall spatial framework for urban development.

The dominant positivistic planning rationality in Danish spatial planning can also be

seen in the development of the Danish planning system in the 1970s. Danish spatial planning has traditionally been characterised by a rather comprehensive and rational planning approach conducted through a three tier-system with a formal hierarchy of plans from the national to the local level with emphasis on spatial co-ordination rather than economic development (CEC, 1997). This unitary planning system has been characterised by a high degree of decentralisation towards the counties and municipalities. This approach has been supplemented by a strong national spatial planning, which quite often has interfered in planning at lower levels through national planning directives during the 1990s. This highly regulatory planning approach has been supplemented by national planning reports which set out national spatial policies for the current government's election period. This highly bureaucratic and regulatory planning system has been under pressure since the election of the liberal and conservative government in 2001, and has as a result been changed substantially in the structural reform in 2007.

In common with other European countries, 'strategic spatial planning' revived in Denmark by the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. The changes in the planning act in 1992 allowed a more growth oriented and vision based planning approach focusing primarily on the economic and environmental aspects on planning, leaving the social aspects in the background. 'Strategic spatial planning' was reinvented in a 'light version' (Jensen, 1999). At the national level, 'strategic spatial planning' became increasingly a political exercise during the 1990s, as national planning reports were linked to parliament elections. The 2006 national planning report represents so far the last planning report in this tradition.

'Strategic spatial planning' in Denmark is currently in transition after the structural reform in 2007 abolished the counties and thereby the middle-tier in the Danish planning system. The counties' planning responsibilities were mainly transferred to the municipalities, which at the same time were merged into larger units in order to better be able to fulfil their new role as authority for spatial planning in both urban and rural areas. At the same time, planning responsibilities were also transferred to the national level, which have led observers to characterise the reform as 'centralised decentralisation' (Andersen, 2008). These changes in Danish 'strategic spatial planning' were put in the centre of the Ministry of the Environment's national planning report from 2006 (Ministry of the Environment, 2006). The national planning report articulated a '*New Map of Denmark*', characterised by two metropolitan areas, one in Eastern Jutland and the other in the Greater Copenhagen Area/Zealand. The planning report highlighted how strengthening the position of these urban regions in

the global economy was decisive for Denmark's economic growth. At the same time, the report made it clear that there was a need for strengthening spatial planning in these urban regions in order to avoid negative side effects of increased growth such as urban sprawl and congestion (Ministry of the Environment, 2006). These economic and spatial rationalities were the point of departure for the experiments with 'strategic spatial planning' analysed in this paper.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

In the above review of the historic development of 'strategic spatial planning' in Denmark, which established the context for our analysis, we identified both procedural and substantive shifts, which are interconnected and contested. We highlighted how a changing state spatial project led to both a (contested) reframing of spatial logics, and to new planning rationalities. These intertwined dynamics have characterised the evolution of 'strategic spatial planning' since the mid-20th century. As noted in the introduction, these dynamics also seem to characterise the evolution of planning beyond the revival of 'strategic spatial planning'. In this paper, we analyse how these complex dynamics are manifested and handled in current episodes of 'strategic spatial planning'. We are interested in the extent to which these general trends characterise the new experiments of 'strategic spatial planning' at various subnational scales in Denmark, and to what extent transitions (and continuities) in planning rationalities and spatial logics play a role in shaping contemporary planning practices. We are interesting in to what extent contemporary planning experiments represent a revival or a crisis of 'strategic spatial planning', and how these experiments might help us to reflect on the future role of 'strategic spatial planning', in Denmark and beyond. This paper sets out to explore the following questions:

- How are contested transformations in the substance and procedure of planning being manifested and handled in contemporary Danish 'strategic spatial planning' experiments?⁵
- How is Danish state spatial project of 'strategic spatial planning' being transformed under neoliberal influence?⁶

THREE PLANNING EPISODES

In this section, we analyse three cases of recent episodes of 'strategic spatial planning' in Denmark. In each case, we examine how contested transitions in planning

rationalities and spatial logics have shaped the planning processes and outputs. All three cases take their point of departure in the 2006 national planning report and the structural reform in 2007, described earlier.

THRE GREATER COPENHAGEN AREA: A RETURN TO TOPDOWN STATE PLANNING

There is a strong tradition for 'strategic spatial planning' at the scale of the Greater Copenhagen Area. The famous 'Finger Plan', prepared in 1947, has had a great impact on the spatial structure of the urban region although the plan was never formally adopted by the government. Instead, the plan (or more precisely the ideas behind the plan) has lived its life at the regional level through various metropolitan institutions and their variants of the 'Finger Plan'. The last metropolitan institution, the Greater Copenhagen Authority, known in Denmark as HUR (Hovedstadens Udviklingsråd) was abolished as part of the structural reform after having prepared the last regional plan for the Greater Copenhagen Area in 2005 (Greater Copenhagen Authority, 2005). As part of the structural reform, the planning authority for the Greater Copenhagen Area was transferred to the Ministry of the Environment, who prepared a national planning directive, entitled the '*Finger Plan 2007*' (Ministry of the Environment, 2007a), to regulate the spatial development in the metropolitan region, as stipulation by the planning act from 2007. The '*Finger Plan 2007*' should thus be understood as a product of the structural reform.

The overall spatial framework for the Greater Copenhagen Area was subject to vigorous political debate in the preparation of the structural reform. The initial objective of writing the spatial framework into the planning act, preferred by leading liberal politicians, was abandoned. This was to the result of pressure from Local Government Denmark, who together with planners from the Ministry of the Environment, proposed a national planning directive as a more planning-oriented and less rigid spatial framework. This model meant that municipalities in the Greater Copenhagen Area would be regulated by a much stricter spatial framework than in the rest of the country, thereby contradicting the main rationality behind the structural reform of 'equal conditions for all municipalities'.

The process of preparing the national planning directive remained rather technical and topdown. Consultation was reduced to information meetings, where the Ministry of the Environment's take on the preparation was presented to the municipalities in the urban region. The preparation of the planning directive was seen as a matter of rewriting the appropriate guidelines from the Greater Copenhagen Authority's

regional plan into a government document, carried out by a single ministry planner.

The main rationality behind the *'Finger Plan 2007'* is that the spatial organisation of the Greater Copenhagen Area has significant impact on the city region's competitiveness. The strong spatial framework contributes not only to build a more sustainable urban region, but it also helps to limit congestion, urban sprawl and maintain attractive recreational green areas (Ministry of the Environment, 2007a). On one hand, the *'Finger Plan 2007'* was intended to introduce a more 'strategic' spatial framework for urban development in the Greater Copenhagen Area by only regulating designation of urban development of regional character, allowing the municipalities to designate areas for local urban development projects themselves. On the other hand, the plan represents a conscious ministry attempt to strengthen the spatial framework, which according to the ministry had been watered down by the previous weak metropolitan body.

One of the key spatial logics in the *'Finger Plan 2007'* is the revised principle of station proximity, which requires greater traffic generating services to be located within close proximity of a train station. The principle encourages concentrated urban development focusing on regeneration of brownfield sites and harbour areas in the inner Copenhagen Area, whilst leaving municipalities in the periphery of the Greater Copenhagen Area and municipalities not blessed by high station proximity with limited development opportunities.

There is a general municipal acceptance of a need for an overall spatial framework in the Greater Copenhagen. The municipalities view the *'Finger Plan 2007'* as a 'necessary evil' - a necessary government response to the fragmented local government structure in the urban region, which is characterised by limited municipal cooperation. However, the topdown regulation has also been contested by a municipal request for a more flexible approach in the national environment centre's administration of the planning directive, which by municipal (and key ministry) planners have been criticised for being too single case-oriented. The municipalities stress that the national planning directive needs to be supplemented by smaller scale dialogue-based planning processes, which resemble the next two case studies, and the spatial strategy-making process around a future light railway along the outer ring road of the Copenhagen Area (Project City Circle, 2009). The latter process reveals also how the spatial logic of station proximity has put increasing pressures on the state to enter discussions about future investments in transport infrastructures to secure municipal development opportunities and fulfil the government's spatial policy of international competitiveness.

THE EASTERN JUTLAND REGION: CONTESTED PLANNING RATIONALITIES IN SPATIAL STRATEGY-MAKING

Eastern Jutland was for the first time articulated as an urban region in the 2006 national planning report, which highlighted how Eastern Jutland was developing into a functional conurbation along the urban corridor from Kolding to Randers with more than 1 million inhabitants (Ministry of the Environment, 2006). On one hand, the national planning report articulated Eastern Jutland as one of Denmark's growth centres where further growth should be encouraged, and on the other hand, it also emphasised a need to initiate long-term spatial planning in order to establish an overall spatial structure for the urban region (Ministry of the Environment, 2006).

The spatial framework was to be prepared through a dialogue-based strategy-making process involving the Ministry of the Environment and the municipalities in the urban region. The original intention of preparing a national planning directive as a 'binding consensus paper' (Ministry of the Environment, 2006) was soon abandoned, as this approach met resistance from the municipalities. Instead, the narrow physical point of departure for the strategy-making process was expanded in order to build common ground for the process. As a result, the spatial vision published in September 2008 (Ministry of the Environment, 2008e) failed to deal with the original problems formulated in the national planning report, such as urban development along the motorway and the emerging urban ribbon. Instead, the vision raised topics such as the region's business structure and culture and leisure facilities, all issues located outside the Ministry of the Environment's planning jurisdiction.

In an attempt to turn the spatial vision into something more tangible, and return to the spatial issues identified in the national planning report, the strategy-making process was relaunched shortly after the publication of the vision. The second phase of the strategy-making process was characterised by interest-based conflicts over the regulatory shape of 'strategic spatial planning'. The Ministry of the Environment wanted to introduce additional regulatory mechanisms to manage urban development in the urban region, whilst the municipalities found it very hard to see how such mechanisms would contribute to the urban region's competitiveness. The municipalities were eager to build a lobbying platform to attract state investments in transport infrastructures, but found during the process that the gap between the interests of a north and south coalition in the urban region was too great to be resolved.

In a final attempt to 'save' the strategy-making process and inform the Ministry of Transport about the need for future transport infrastructure investments in the

urban region, a small group of municipal planners collaborated in the preparation of a spatial strategy in the beginning of 2010. The strategy failed to gain legitimacy among the other municipalities, resulting in a continuous watering down of the content of the spatial strategy. In negotiations the strategy was reduced to recommendations for future urban development in the urban region, published in June 2010 (Ministry of the Environment, 2010e). These recommendations were characterised by the municipalities as ‘lowest common denominator recommendations’, which bring nothing new to municipal planning.

The spatial strategy-making process has been disrupted by various delays, municipal elections and ministerial changes. However, it seems that the eventual failure of the process can be understood as a consequence of unresolved conflicts over planning rationalities and spatial logics. It is clear that no common ground was found on what it meant to be involved in ‘strategic spatial planning’ processes in the urban region. The participating actors failed to reach a shared understanding of what the important spatial issues were, and which kind of output was needed to address these issues. It also seems likely that certain municipalities joined the process with the aim of disrupting the process and thereby preventing the state from introducing stronger spatial regulation.

The Ministry of the Environment has been oddly ‘passive’ in the process, leaving much of the discussion to the municipalities. This raises questions about whether the legitimacy for an overall spatial framework in Eastern Jutland was maintained throughout the process, or whether legitimacy was lost as a new set of planning rationalities gained ground within the ministry.⁷

REGION ZEALAND: TOWARDS SELF-REGULATORY SPATIAL STRATEGY-MAKING?

The 2006 national planning report highlighted how the entire Zealand should be understood as one coherent commuter area and urban region, and identified the need to ensure a well-functioning urban structure in relation to the transport infrastructure through spatial planning (Ministry of the Environment, 2006). With a point of departure in this policy, the Ministry of the Environment initiated a dialogue-based spatial strategy-making process in August 2008, involving 17 municipalities and the administrative region of Zealand. The process included also the Danish Transport Authority (Trafikstyrelsen) located within the Ministry of Transport, when discussions on public transportation became an important strategic issue.

The key motivation behind the process was to initiate a debate about how the rest

of Zealand, beyond the Greater Copenhagen Area, might survive the current trend of centralisation of population and private investments towards the capital region. Important for this 'survival strategy' became the aim of creating a stronger foundation for public transport infrastructures (mainly railway) by concentrating future urban development near existing railway stations. The municipalities hoped that they by committing themselves to designate areas for urban development according to this spatial logic, they would strengthen their position in the national competition for future investments in transport infrastructures. The municipal lobbying for transport infrastructure investments took a point of departure in a policy document (Region Zealand et al., 2008) prepared together with Region Zealand only a few months before the launch of the strategy-making process.

The Ministry of the Environment, having learned from the early municipal resistance in the twin processes in Eastern Jutland, took a more 'careful approach' and adopted the role of project secretary, focusing on the delivery of the process. In contrast to the process in Eastern Jutland, the Danish Transport Authority played an increasingly important role in the Zealand process in terms of providing technical knowledge and 'educating' the municipalities in the main spatial logics underpinning the Ministry of Transport's planning approach, such as to which extent an increase in population would trigger a new railway station or increased services. The Ministry of Transport was not able to guarantee additional investments in transport infrastructure, as a new bill had just been passed by the government in January 2009 programming future transport infrastructure investments until 2020 for a provisional amount of 94 billion Danish kroner (Danish Government, 2009). The Ministry of Transport's point of departure for entering the process was thus to discuss how future urban development would support these planned investments.

This conflict over spatial logics was partly resolved by reducing the dialogue to 'objective' and 'factual' discussions among planning professionals. The participants were thereby able to downplay the political aspects of the discussions, which disrupted the process in Eastern Jutland. The discussions took inspiration from the spatial logic of a hierarchy of cities and towns, which had dominated Danish 'strategic spatial planning' for decades. The towns in the urban region were categorised from A to D according to their 'transport efficiency' (Ministry of the Environment, 2010a, p.8), the Zealand equivalent of the 'Finger Plan's logic of station proximity. This spatial logic formed the backbone in the non-binding spatial strategy, entitled the '*Structure Picture 2030*' (Ministry of the Environment, 2010a), published in March 2010. The spatial strategy was accompanied by an ideas catalogue of best practice examples of

sustainable urban development (Ministry of the Environment, 2010b), intended as inspiration for future municipal planning.

What is interesting about the *'Structure Picture 2030'* and the dialogue in Region Zealand is the deliberate reduction of 'strategic spatial planning' to more traditional spatial planning, striving for objectivity and hierarchical frames for urban development. In many ways, this planning approach represents a 'back to basics' thinking, in order to rethink the urban development in the urban region. The *'Structure Picture 2030'* is also interesting in the sense that the spatial framework, aiming at decentralisation at the regional scale as a counter-strategy to increased centralisation towards the Greater Copenhagen Area, is interpreted as a stronger centralisation of urban development towards the major towns connected by the railway at the local level. This brings up the question of what role the rural areas in the region might play in the development of the region as a whole. This question remains unanswered in the spatial strategy.

PLANNING RATIONALITIES AND SPATIAL LOGICS

In this section, we analyse how different planning rationalities and spatial logics have shaped the new experiments of 'strategic spatial planning' in Denmark.

FROM TOP-DOWN REGULATION TO COLLABORATIVE POLICY-MAKING?

The planning literature highlights a transition in planning rationalities, from a topdown regulatory planning approach to a collaborative policy-making activity, at least as far as 'strategic spatial planning' is concerned. This development trend seems to fit at least two of the three cases analysed in this paper. However, the cases also show that even though one planning rationality might dominate the planning process, competing planning rationalities co-exist and contribute to shape planning practice. The analysis suggests that there seems to be a particular Danish approach to 'strategic spatial planning', which not only rests in a more rational comprehensive planning tradition but also in certain spatial logics, which again and again seem to influence how practitioners think about 'strategic spatial planning'.⁸

The spatial principles of station proximity, a division between urban and rural and hierarchy of cities and towns all seem to influence the way Danish planning practitioners think about 'strategic spatial planning'. At the same time, these spatial logics represent also a desire to turn the rather abstract nature of spatial policy-making into something more tangible. As a result, spatial policy-making is quickly redefined

into the more well-known spatial vocabulary of regulatory land use planning. These Danish cases of 'strategic spatial planning' at subnational scales seem to suggest that without such a 'translation', planners involved in 'strategic spatial planning' are unable to sufficiently deal with the complex spatial issues in question. The case of the spatial strategy-making process in Region Zealand shows how planners were able to overcome some of the struggles that had disrupted the process in Eastern Jutland by reducing the dialogue to a strictly 'objective' and 'factual' level.⁹

Danish 'strategic spatial planning' at the national scale is characterised by a strong state which often has intervened in spatial matters of national interest. The Ministry of the Environment has often played the role of a 'teacher on playground duty' closely looking the municipalities over the shoulders to make sure they would do proper planning. A former head of planning in the ministry highlighted how the dominant planning rationality in the ministry has been rather conservative in terms of treating the municipalities as amateurs:

"...there has been a conservatism in the national planning [...] now I put it a bit squared, but they [the municipalities] are by definition amateurish, they must be helped all the way through and we know better. I have never really liked that." (Interview, PBN, authors' translation)

Traditionally, the counties have had the role of supervising municipal planning and more importantly designating areas for urban development. It was therefore not without concern among ministry and county planners, many of which today are placed in the national environment centres, when this planning authority was transferred to the municipalities as part of the 2007 structural reform. This planning rationality has in particular dominated 'strategic spatial planning' in the Greater Copenhagen Area, but it is also clearly visible in the Eastern Jutland planning process. A ministry planner from the Eastern Jutland process explained that:

"... the municipalities do not yet have so many experiences as authority for the rural areas. They have just taken over the competence for the landscape. They still wear blinkers and think purely in the auspices of urban development and commercial development, and they have not yet taken ownership of protection interests." (Interview, JP, 2009, authors' translation).

This planning rationality dominated the initial setup of the spatial strategy-making processes in Eastern Jutland and Region Zealand. These processes were initially

intended as means to prepare an overall spatial structure for Eastern Jutland and Region Zealand similar to the Greater Copenhagen Area. The intention was to involve the municipalities more actively in the implementation processes of the ministry's spatial policies, as they had gained a strengthened position in terms of spatial planning as a consequence of the structural reform. A former head of planning in the ministry explained:

“We worked with that we had to move from a - that was my intention anyway - to move from a topdown thinking about the national planning report to a national planning report developed in dialogue, but at the same time it must not be toothless seen from the state's perspective. There must be some strategies, there must be some policy statements, but the implementation of the policy statements and concrete formulations are done in dialogue.” (Interview, PBN, 2009, authors' translation)

Both strategy-making processes therefore started out with a tension and municipal suspicion of whether the ministry would use the dialogue to slip a national planning directive through the backdoor. This was in particular a concern as the 2006 national planning report highlighted a new and more flexible use of national planning directives as binding consensus papers in dialogue processes (Ministry of the Environment, 2006). This suspicion contrasts with the municipal support for topdown regulatory planning found in the Greater Copenhagen Area, although the spatial framework in the *'Finger Plan 2007'* was experienced as a stronger regulation. The municipalities saw the spatial strategy-making processes, partly, as means to lobby for future transport infrastructure investments, and partly, as ministry recognition of the municipalities' increased importance in terms of spatial planning.¹⁰ The lobbying for future transport infrastructure investments were encouraged by increased political attention towards this issue, resulting in the Infrastructure Commission's report (2008) published early in 2008, and the government bill passed a year later (Danish Government, 2009). The municipalities hoped that they by uniting within their region on a limited number of investments would stand stronger in the national competition. The municipal lobbying was supplemented by a growth-oriented planning rationality, which in particular was evident in the Greater Copenhagen Area and Eastern Jutland, a planning rationality which clearly was at odds with the Ministry of the Environment's approach to 'strategic spatial planning'. The municipal planning rationality can be illustrated by the quotation below from a municipal technical manager involved in the Eastern

Jutland strategy-making process.

“The point of view is clearly how can the state then contribute to maintain an increased growth in the Eastern Jutland urban ribbon, now that they themselves have written that they by the way think it is important and have taken initiative to a work about what to do. So there is no doubt about that this has been the municipal and also the political point of view in the Eastern Jutland Area. What can you do to increase the growth in the area?” (Interview, CN, 2010, authors’ translation)

The municipalities argued that introducing new spatial logics, concentrating urban development around key public transportation nodes, would require additional investments in transport infrastructures to support this spatial policy. In this way, the municipalities were able to direct the dialogue with the state away from the Ministry of the Environment - focusing on spatial regulation - to the Ministry of Transport. But the Ministry of Transport’s limited involvement in the strategy-making processes resulted in a municipal dissatisfaction with what the state had to offer in the dialogue. As the Ministry of Transport awaited strategic analyses of the need for new transport infrastructure investments to be carried out in the period 2010-13, the outputs from the strategy-making processes would at best from their perspective be able to support these analyses. However, this required a level of detail in the spatial strategy-making processes that was highly unrealistic and unlikely to be achieved.

This analysis illustrates that articulating the recent changes in Danish ‘strategic spatial planning’ as a turn from regulatory topdown state planning to dialogue-based policy-making does not do justice to the complexity of planning practice. Instead, it is evident that dialogue-based processes still are underpinned by strong regulatory rationalities. The analysis identifies three contested planning rationalities, which all have contributed to shape the spatial strategy-making processes. Firstly, the Ministry of the Environment holds still a strong regulatory rationality despite the recent turn towards policy-making. This planning rationality has been challenged by the municipalities who, although appreciating the overall spatial framework in the Greater Copenhagen Area, request a more flexible dialogue-oriented approach. Secondly, the Ministry of Transport holds a strong focus on the costs and benefits of investments in transport infrastructures. This planning rationality has been contested by the municipalities on the basis that it leaves little space for dialogue and risks reducing ‘strategic spatial planning’ processes into impossible quantification exercises. Thirdly,

the municipalities hold a strong development-oriented planning rationality which translates into a spatial logic of attracting as many investments as possible to their region or specific municipality. This approach has been contested by the Ministry of the Environment, who fears that such a perspective would be prioritised at the expense of environmental protection.

FROM WELFARE STATE TO THE COMPETITIVE STATE?

Danish 'strategic spatial planning' has always been tightly connected to the development of the welfare state focusing on equalisation of growth across the entire territory. Central to this ideal is the hierarchy of cities and towns, which has remained a key concept in Danish 'strategic spatial planning' after the abolition of the ideal of spatial Keynesianism in the beginning of the 1990s. The idea of a hierarchy of cities and towns was finally replaced in the 2006 national planning report by the notion of metropolitan regions and rural areas. Has Denmark finally moved from being a welfare state to a competitive state?

The three case studies illustrate how the tension between equalisation and concentration still remain central to 'strategic spatial planning' processes in the 21st century. It is also important to note that equalisation on one scale might easily mean concentration on another, as illustrated in the case of Region Zealand. From an overall perspective, it seems evident that the recent experiments with 'strategic spatial planning' focus on concentration of urban development and growth, both from an environmental and competitiveness steered rationality. Urban development is to be located in close proximity to major nodes in the public transportation system. This planning rationality is steered by the spatial principle of station proximity.

On the other hand, another set of rationalities seems to pull the planning processes in another direction. The municipalities behave to a large extent still as small kingdoms despite the recent initiatives towards dialogue and cooperation. Voluntary concentration of urban development is therefore only likely to take place within the municipal boundaries and not across the entire region. This seems to suggest that in a decentralised planning system with strong tradition for spatial co-ordination and local competition, 'strategic spatial planning' at the subnational scales is more likely to focus on equalisation, at least if more collaborative and dialogue-based approaches are taken.¹¹ If increased concentration of urban development is politically desirable, it has to be regulated from the top, as in the case of the Greater Copenhagen Area. The more likely scenario seems to be that the general trend in society towards increased concentration of urban development and growth in the

major cities slowly will contribute to a more sustainable urban development (at least from an environmental and economic perspective). This seems especially to be the case within the current neoliberal political climate in Denmark, which we will turn to now.

THE NEW WINDS IN THE MINISTRY

Neoliberal winds of change have recently blown through the Ministry of the Environment, making it difficult to predict the future path of 'strategic spatial planning' in Denmark. As part of the structural reform, a lot of organisational changes took place within the ministry which included decentralisation of the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning, now entitled the Danish Nature Agency, substitution in the management of the agency including the head of national planning, together with the appointment of a new more liberal Minister of the Environment (who again in the beginning of 2010 was replaced by another liberal minister). The changes in the ministry meant that the Danish Nature Agency increasingly has taken a more physical and sector-oriented approach to planning focusing on issues such as nature preservation, water quality planning etc. and that 'strategic spatial planning' is given a lower priority, which is also reflected in the agency's new name. This is especially significant in the most recent national planning report from 2010 (Ministry of the Environment, 2010e), which has been criticised within the Danish planning community for being a 'weak cup of tea'. These organisational changes should be seen as part of a wider continuous process which since the change of government in 2001 slowly has dismantled large part of the planning administration at the national and regional level.

The organisational changes and new political agendas have caused some concern and confusion among the planners in the ministry, as they have not always been aware of either the management's or the minister's attitude towards the strategy-making processes they were part of. This has particularly been the case for the processes in Eastern Jutland and Region Zealand which were conceived by the former conservative minister, but implemented by subsequent liberal ministers. To survive, these processes had to find a new foundation in the more liberal political climate, which did not have the same regulatory ambitions as articulated in the 2006 national planning report. These ministerial changes have also meant that the promised process of revising the '*Finger Plan 2007*' has yet to be initiated.¹² Furthermore, the ministry has withdrawn from the spatial strategy-making processes in Eastern Jutland and Region Zealand without any immediate plans to follow up on these experiments, or to pursue the

spatial policies presented in the previous national planning report. There seems to be clear signs of a new emerging planning rationality in the ministry characterised by a reduced level of interest in 'strategic spatial planning', and a reduction of state involvement in spatial planning activities to those formally required by the planning act.

CONCLUSIONS

The Danish case of 'strategic spatial planning' illustrates how contemporary planning practice is being shaped by ongoing struggles between various contested planning rationalities and spatial logics, and by transitions and continuities in spatial planning. The practice of 'strategic spatial planning' in Denmark has undergone a concerted reorientation in recent years as a consequence of an emerging neoliberal agenda, which has promoted a growth-oriented planning approach emphasising a new spatial logic of growth centres in the major cities and urban regions. Furthermore, new collaborative, multi-level strategy-making processes have emerged, in line with recent European experience. This suggests that a certain knowledge transfer is taking place in planning practice, within which certain planning rationalities and spatial logics have become fashionable (Healey, 2007).

The analysis of the three planning episodes highlights how the new style of 'strategic spatial planning' with its associated spatial logics is being continuously challenged by a persistent regulatory, topdown rationality of 'strategic spatial planning', rooted in spatial Keynesianism. In order to turn the abstract task of spatial policy-making into something more tangible, spatial planning is quickly redefined into a familiar spatial vocabulary of regulatory land use planning. The 'Finger Plan' for the Greater Copenhagen Area and its associated spatial logics are so embedded in Danish planning culture that they continue to set a precedent for contemporary 'strategic spatial planning' experiments. This suggests that a particular Danish approach to 'strategic spatial planning' exists which remains rooted in a strong regulatory practice.

However, this planning approach has increasingly come under pressure in the current neoliberal political climate. After more than a decade of strong support for 'strategic spatial planning', culminating in the *'New Map of Denmark'*, the *'Finger Plan 2007'* and 'strategic spatial planning' experiments in Eastern Jutland and Region Zealand, the state spatial project of 'strategic spatial planning' does now indeed seem to be in crisis. As in many other European counties, the normative idea of 'strategic

spatial planning’ does not sit easily within an increasingly neoliberal political climate. Convergence, when it occurs, is expressed in spatial strategies that “favour the most aggressive neoliberal models of urban and regional development” (Cerreto et al., 2010, p.x). As Albrechts (2010) reminds us, the capacity of ‘strategic spatial planning’ to deliver its desired outcomes depends on the political will of the institutions involved – not only in setting the process in motion, but also in keeping it going. The need for maintaining momentum seems to be where the recent Danish experiments with ‘strategic spatial planning’ fall short. This suggests that paying close attention to even minor changes in the political climate and institutional context is crucial for understanding contemporary transformations of ‘strategic spatial planning’.

In the context of the emerging crisis in ‘strategic spatial planning’, we see two apparent trajectories. Either ‘strategic spatial planning’ is being reconceptualised and reframed to fit the current neoliberal political climate, or it is being reduced to a repeat of the 1980s ‘hibernation’. The Danish case, at present, seems to follow the latter path. We encourage academics and practitioners from around Europe to learn from the Danish case, and to take notice of how quickly the long and proud Danish planning tradition has changed under neoliberal influence.

NOTES

- 1 This is what I in chapter 2 refer to as the socio-political context.
- 2 In chapter 2, I highlight how strategic spatial planning should be understood as an elusive concept trying to capture innovations in planning practice and planning theory, which do not necessarily correspond. Whilst, I in this paper have used inverted commas to illustrate this potential gap between Danish strategic spatial planning and other strategic spatial planning(s), I have in the PhD thesis used strategic spatial planning as an umbrella term, capturing both innovations in planning practice and planning theory.
- 3 This is what I in chapter 2 refer to as the dynamics between wider societal changes and the socio-political context. The example here illustrates how the dynamics between wider societal changes and the socio-political context change the context of strategic spatial planning episodes.
- 4 Here, I am not suggesting that I know the authors’ position on theory of science issues. Instead, I use the term positivism to refer to a strong empirical approach to scientific knowledge based on objective enquiry.
- 5 This is a slight rewording of the first sub-research question. Here, I have replaced ‘the core idea of planning’ by ‘the substance and procedure of planning’. The latter refers to the two sub-themes in this paper: spatial logics and planning rationalities, see figure 1.1.
- 6 This question focuses on how changes in the socio-political context influence episodes of strategic spatial planning.
- 7 One of the main lines of enquiry in this PhD project is how changes in the socio-political

context influence episodes of strategic spatial planning. I discuss this issue later in the paper and throughout the PhD.

- 8 In chapter 8, I discuss the interpretations of spatiality underpinning this particular Danish planning approach.
- 9 In chapter 8, I suggest that reducing the dialogue to a strictly 'objective' and 'factual' level might be understood as depoliticisation in which the spatial politics of strategy-making are blurred.
- 10 In chapter 9, I explore how policy agendas are shaped in the planning episodes, and how the episodes are turned into cross-municipal lobby platforms for investments in transport infrastructure.
- 11 In chapter 8, I refer to this issue as the spatial politics of strategy-making.
- 12 The Ministry of the Environment has since published a discussion paper on the '*Finger Plan 2012*' (Ministry of the Environment, 2011), which is in public hearing until the beginning of June 2011. I will reflect on what the content of the discussion paper might tell us about the future of strategic spatial planning in Denmark in chapter 10.

THE SPATIAL POLITICS OF SPATIAL REPRESENTATION: RELATIONALITY AS A MEDIUM FOR DEPOLITICISATION?

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the interplay between the spatial politics of new governance landscapes and innovations in the use of spatial representations in planning. The central premise is that planning experiments with new relational approaches become enmeshed in spatial politics. The case of strategic spatial planning in Denmark reveals how fuzzy spatial representations and relational spatial concepts are being used to depoliticise strategic spatial planning processes and to camouflage spatial politics. The paper concludes that, while relational geography might play an important role in building consensus, it plays an equal important role in supporting current neoliberal transformations of strategic spatial planning.

INTRODUCTION

In the European planning research literature, there has been an increased interest in the role of spatial representations in strategic spatial planning processes at national, subnational and regional scales (Dühr, 2004, 2007; Jensen & Richardson, 2001, 2003, 2004; Neuman, 1996; Zonneveld, 2000) and the conceptions of space and place underpinning these representations (Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Healey, 2004, 2006b, 2007). Within planning theory, there is a growing body of literature arguing that strategic spatial planning needs to embrace the ideas of relational geography developed in the fields of human geography and sociology of planning (Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Graham & Healey, 1999; Graham & Marvin, 2001; Healey, 2004, 2006b, 2007), in order “to grasp the dynamic diversity of the complex co-location of multiple webs of relations that transect and intersect across an urban area” (Healey, 2007, p.3). From a US perspective, Friedmann (1993) has argued for a similar break with Euclidean geography.

Whilst the understanding of spatiality has always to some extent been relational, representations of space and place within the field of planning have traditionally been concerned with depicting land use in a regulatory manner. The new strategic spatial planning emerging from the beginning of the 1990s was concerned with distancing the core role of planning from its regulatory associations by bringing new relational understandings of spatiality and representations of space and place into the planning field. Rather than depicting land use, the new spatial representations were seen as persuasive devices playing a crucial role in mobilising support and building legitimacy for spatial strategies across fragmented governance landscapes (Healey, 2006b, 2007). Spatial representations were transformed from land use maps into impressionistic and abstract policy maps, accompanied by supportive metaphors and storylines (Dühr, 2004, 2007; Healey, 2007; Jensen & Richardson, 2003). Such new forms of spatial representation have been termed ‘fuzzy maps’ (Davoudi & Strange, 2009).

Whilst spatial planning via the concept of relationality has sought inspiration from academic discourses within geography, there still seem to be substantial differences in how spatiality is handled in planning and geography, reflecting the lack of intellectual integration between the two disciplines (Phelps & Tewdwr-Jones, 2008). In the planning literature, it is argued that relational conceptions of spatiality, including fuzzy spatial representations, play an important role in building support for spatial strategies (Healey, 2004, 2007). However, this literature has so far paid little attention to the

nature of the interplay between the spatial politics of new governance landscapes and the use of relational spatial representations in planning. How, precisely, do relational approaches to space capture, reflect, or contribute to the situated power relations in planning? In particular, is it the persuasive and impressionistic characteristics of these representations that plays a part in mobilising support, or conversely are their abstract characteristics the consequence of attempts to broker agreement or build consensus?

These questions seem particularly relevant in the context of contemporary experimentation with new soft forms of governance (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a; 2010; Haughton et al., 2010) as vehicles for building governance capacity (Healey, 2007) across and in-between formal scales of planning, embedded with all sorts of spatial politics.¹ There is a growing body of literature discussing the implications of spatial politics at urban and regional scales, and also on cross-border strategy-making (e.g. de Vries, 2008; Fabbro & Haselsberger, 2009). Furthermore, Waterhout & Faludi (2002) and Zonneveld (2000) have illustrated how the spatial politics in the process of preparing the '*European Spatial Development Perspective*' (ESDP) remained contested and prevented member states from building consensus on policy maps depicting the future European territory. This suggests that the 'fuzziness' of spatial representations, or the absence or presence of spatial representations, might reflect the nature and degree of contested spatial politics in strategic spatial planning (Jensen & Richardson, 2003). However, fuzzy spatial representations might not only result from contested spatial politics in consensus-seeking strategy-making processes, they might also, as suggested by Davoudi & Strange (2009), be deployed as conscious attempts to depoliticise spatial strategy-making processes in order to avoid potential political tensions. In this way, fuzzy spatial representations become an effective means to camouflage spatial politics and depoliticise strategic spatial planning processes.

In this paper, then, we analyse the interplay between the spatial politics of strategic spatial planning and the spatial representations used in these planning processes. The aim is to explore the extent to which planning experiments with new relational approaches become enmeshed in the particular power relations where they are used. Focusing on the case of strategic spatial planning in Denmark, we analyse how spatial politics influence conceptions of space and place and spatial representations in strategic spatial planning processes.² First, we review the planning literature to build a framework for analysing how relational understandings of spatiality are captured in spatial representations and how the spatial politics embedded in these representations

can be identified. Second, we explore how conceptions of space and place are changing in Denmark in a context of changing governance structures, and how the spatial politics of new governance landscapes influence spatial representations of new planning spaces. This analysis draws on three case studies of strategic spatial planning experiments initiated at subnational scales in Denmark in connection to the 2006 national planning report. Third, the evidence from these analyses are synthesised in a discussion highlighting particular Danish conceptions of space and place and the spatial politics evolving around them. In conclusion, we argue that relational spatial representations do important persuasive and camouflaging work in strategic spatial planning processes, contributing to a blurring of spatial politics in strategic spatial planning, and supporting neoliberal transformations of spatial planning.

THEORISING SPATIAL POLITICS AND CONCEPTIONS OF SPACE AND PLACE IN STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING

In this section, we build the theoretical foundation for analysing conceptions of space and place and spatial politics in strategic spatial planning. We build the theoretical discussion on the increasing European planning literature examining conceptions of space and place in spatial strategy-making processes (Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Harris & Hooper, 2004; Healey, 2004, 2006b, 2007) and the use of cartographic representations in strategic spatial planning (Dühr, 2004, 2007), together with planning literature stressing the contested nature of spatial representations (Jensen & Richardson, 2001, 2003, 2004; Zonneveld, 2000). In this paper, we use the term ‘spatial representations’ to refer to maps and other representations of space of more or less abstract and fuzzy character. We will return to these characteristics later in this section.

CONCEPTIONS OF SPACE AND PLACE IN STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING

Conceptions of space and place in strategic spatial planning processes have traditionally been rooted in Euclidean geometry and an absolute view of space (Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Graham & Healey, 1999; Healey, 2004, 2006b, 2007). This positivistic spatial rationality underpinned many of the famous European structure plans and master plans produced in the mid-20th century. Maps were prepared by a mix of scientific methods and spatial visioning. Space was viewed as a neutral container into which human activity simply could be poured (Healey, 2007). The core spatial logics were

based around a division between the urban and rural. During the 1960s and 1970s a more procedural and system view of planning emerged in which cities and regions were conceptualised as complex systems, which could only be understood and monitored through models developed from a spatial science approach (Allmendinger, 2009). These models still play an important part of contemporary transport planning when it comes to predicting future transport patterns. In terms of spatial planning, planning was concerned with developing spatial laws and organising principles around which urban development could be organised (Davoudi & Strange, 2009).

In parallel to the revived interest in strategic spatial planning in Europe in the beginning of the 1990s, a new relational understanding of space and place found ground within planning theory. One of the core theoretical ideas underpinning a relational understanding of space and place was Castell's (1996) notion of 'space of flows' and 'space of place', which broke with the previous hierarchical understanding of scale and gave terms such as 'connectivity' and 'proximity' new meanings, as these now were to be understood in time rather than physical proximity. These ideas were developed further in order to capture the emerging fragmentation and splintering of society (Graham & Marvin, 2001), in particular in terms of in European spatial policy-making (Jensen & Richardson, 2001). In terms of spatial representations a new vocabulary of networks, webs, flows, nodes, and hubs were introduced as new organising principles inspired by European planning discourses (Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Healey, 2006b). In these new understandings of space as socially and culturally produced, spatial representations set out to capture how space was lived and understood by its inhabitants and users in present time rather than a distant future.

In recent processes of strategic spatial planning, planning practice has tried to see the world through webs, flows and networks and incorporate a relational understanding of spatiality into representations of space. This is perhaps most evident in recent processes of spatial strategy-making at the scales of the recently devolved nations of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in the UK and the English regions. Although the spatial representations in these cases remain somewhat static and two-dimensional, evidence suggests that planning practice is embracing relationality in spatial representations through 'fuzzy maps':

"However, what seems to have changed is the way in which space and place is represented in these two-dimensional maps. The change signals a tentative move away from the positivist portrayal of space as absolute and fixed to one that is more fluid and dynamic, albeit not

necessarily representing the complex layers of spatial relations. The shift has been captured in the notion of ‘fuzzy maps’. What features less in the plans is the Euclidean focus on geometric accuracy of key maps that depict spatiality as a mosaic of land uses, criss-crossed with road and rail lines. In its place, the plans’ key maps show the spatial relations of the planned territory as fluid, with fuzzy boundaries.” (Davoudi & Strange, 2009, p.225)

The fuzzy maps are characterised by softening of internal boundaries, articulated in the notion of ‘fuzzy boundaries’ (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a; Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Haughton et al., 2010), whilst depicting external boundaries as sharply and distinctly defined. The hard external boundaries underline strategic spatial planning’s important role in building identity for newly devolved nations and regional territories (Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Neuman, 1996), whilst the fuzzy internal boundaries reflect the emergence of new soft forms of governance (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a; 2010; Haughton et al., 2010). Furthermore, the concepts of flows, webs and networks are often represented by arrows illustrating internal flows and external connectivities. The key characteristics of Euclidean and relational understandings of space are presented in table 8.1.

It remains uncertain whether these new fuzzy spatial representations do in fact indicate changing geographical understandings of spatiality among planning practitioners, or whether new relational conceptions of space and place are more or less unconsciously brought into a discursive melting pot full of various spatial conceptions and logics, from which planners select whatever they find appropriate to accrete meanings to specific planning contexts (Healey, 2004). This suggests that bringing relational geography into planning practice remains a normative planning theoretical project, which might be picked up by planning practice for various reasons. It is therefore important not to confuse representational vagueness with relational spatial understandings.

SPATIAL POLITICS IN REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACE

It is with this in mind that we seek to uncover the rationalities of spatial representations and embedded spatial conceptions in strategic spatial planning processes. In this analysis, we understand spatial representations as contested rather than outputs of rational spatial analysis (Jensen & Richardson, 2003). We seek to uncover spatial representations’ important role in framing certain ideas and foregrounding certain

Table 8.1: Key characteristics of Euclidean and relational geography (based on Healey, 2004, p.48; 2007, pp.209-210; Davoudi & Strange, 2009, p.40)

	Euclidean geography	Relational geography
<i>Conception of space and place</i>	Objective and measurable	Socially and culturally produced
<i>Spatial logics</i>	Nested hierarchies with fixed boundaries Physical proximity	Unbounded spaces in webs and networks Connectivity (mental and physical)
<i>Time and future</i>	Linear, forecasted	Time as present, multiple time frames
<i>Visual representation</i>	Static maps, zoning, land use	Impressionistic (storytelling) fuzzy maps

ways of thinking, whilst bracketing others (Jensen & Richardson, 2003). Following Healey’s (2007, pp.215-216) metaphor of a Greek theatre, we expect strategic spatial planning processes to be “filled with ‘drama’ – struggle, agony, comedy and tragedy – in which different parties ‘agonise’ over difficult moral and material dilemmas.” We expect processes of spatial strategy-making to be enmeshed in spatial politics and that these politics significantly influence the nature of spatial representations. Before laying out a framework for this analysis, we illustrate how spatial politics might influence representations of space through an example from Danish spatial planning.

The modern Danish planning system, built up in the 1970s, can be characterised as a systematic and comprehensive approach to spatial planning combined with social welfarist ambitions of balanced development across the entire country. In the 1980s, national investments were put into the more rural parts of Denmark to upgrade cities here into national and regional centres and thereby fulfil national spatial policies of equal access to public and private services across the entire country. An integral part of these spatial politics was the spatial logic of a hierarchy of cities and towns inspired by the German central place theory, which was depicted in spatial representations at all scales. In the beginning of the 1990s, the spatial policy of a balanced development and equal access to services was abandoned for a new set of spatial policies aiming at

positioning Denmark within Europe. National investments in transport infrastructures were now directed towards the Greater Copenhagen Area in order to improve its international competitiveness. Again these spatial policies were clearly visible in national spatial policy maps, where Copenhagen was foregrounded at the expense of the rest of the country. This example highlights how spatial politics are not only part of processes of spatial strategy-making, but deeply embedded in representations of space.

We now turn to our analytical framework. Firstly, we are interested in whether the absence or presence of spatial representations can indicate something about the level of contested spatial politics in the strategy-making process (Jensen & Richardson, 2003). Secondly, we are interesting in how some regions and spatial issues are foregrounded, put into the centre of policy attention, whilst others are backgrounded or even excluded from the policy map (Jensen & Richardson, 2003; Healey, 2007). Jensen & Richardson (2003) have highlighted the spatial politics of location and connectivity of ‘being on the map’ in European policy-making, whilst in other aspects of policy, it might be preferable not to be represented. Spatial politics seem especially to be contested in questions of distributive character (Harris & Hooper, 2004), as they bring out the winners and losers of a spatial policy more clearly (van Duinen, 2004). The foregrounding and backgrounding of spatial representations should be understood as a result of contested processes of filtering, focusing and framing in which policy-makers fight for attention (Healey, 2007). In the ESDP process, the most contested spatial politics arose around spatial representations visualising core vs. periphery and economically strong vs. weak regions (Dühr, 2007; Faludi & Waterhout, 2002; Zonneveld, 2000).

Thirdly, strategic spatial planning has still redistributive implications and is quintessentially political in every sense of the word (Harris & Hooper, 2004). We are interesting in how certain representations of space, especially representational vagueness, are used as conscious means to blur spatial politics and provide temporary spaces of consensus. Davoudi & Strange (2009, p.226) have shown how fuzzy maps of devolved nations in the UK and English regions, in particular blurring of internal boundaries, have effectively depoliticised spatial strategy-making processes in order to avoid potential political tensions.

“Blurring of the boundaries (both functional and administrative) appears to have offered a way out of the dilemma [of spatial politics]. By not having lines drawn on them, the maps remain more suggestive

than prescriptive and hence avoid potential political tensions. Hence, whereas the ascendancy of the ‘fuzzy maps’ phenomenon signals a growing awareness of the relational space (albeit limited to economic-driven functional relations), it also signals the attempt to depoliticise the planning process by blurring the political boundaries on the map.”

This suggests that fuzzy spatial representations borrowing from relational geography might provide temporary spaces for consensus, but as tensions are not confronted, these are likely to surface later, limiting spatial representations’ persuasive power and spatial strategies’ transformative force (Healey, 2007). In this way, relationality might act as vehicle for depoliticisation of strategic spatial planning processes through the deployment of representational vagueness, blurring the spatial politics of strategy-making. Here we understand depoliticisation as conscious processes of hiding or blurring the spatial politics of strategy-making, furthered by a neoliberal political agenda. Rather than understanding depoliticisation as resulting in strategy-making processes ‘without politics’, we see depoliticisation a conscious political strategy to blur the *realpolitik* of strategy-making, as part of a wider contemporary neoliberal political agenda transforming the state spatial project of strategic spatial planning. What seems to be at stake here is an increasing blurring in spatial planning processes regarding who is involved and how, and whether these processes lead to democratic deficits.

In this paper, we suggest that fuzzy spatial representations, rather than actively building support for spatial strategies, provide a means to camouflage contested spatial politics. Critical attention needs therefore not only to be paid to how relationality is depicted in spatial representations, but also to the work done by and with relational geographical concepts in building support for spatial strategies.

SPATIAL REPRESENTATIONS IN DANISH STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING

In this section, we present our analysis of conceptions of space and place in Danish strategic spatial planning, and of how spatial politics have influenced representations of space. We begin the section by analysing changing conceptions of space and place in Danish national spatial planning, before turning to three processes of spatial strategy-making at subnational scales. The analysis is informed by documentary analysis of spatial strategies and spatial representations prepared through these

processes, together with 18 in-depth interviews with national, regional and municipal planners involved in these processes. In these interviews planners were asked specific questions about the nature of the spatial representations that were developed, and how spatial politics had influenced them. In this way, the analysis of the spatial representations was enriched by the appurtenant metaphors, storylines and claims made about them.

CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF SPACE AND PLACE: TOWARDS A 'NEW MAP OF DENMARK'

There is a strong tradition for strategic spatial planning at the national scale in Denmark. National planning reports have been prepared since the mid-1970s presenting an account of current development trends in Danish spatial planning. In the beginning of the 1990s, national planning reports were turned into policy documents and linked to parliament elections, whilst still maintaining their legacy of reporting development trends. At the same time, spatial representations were given a more central role in communicating national spatial policies at typically a time horizon of 15-20 years. The Danish planning system built up in the 1970s was based on different scales of bounded administrative units (municipalities and counties), combined with the spatial logic of a hierarchy of cities and towns inspired by the German central place theory. This approach was combined with a comprehensive and rational planning approach conducted through a formal three tiered hierarchy of plans from the national to the local level (CEC, 1997). As noted earlier in the example of changing spatial politics, Danish planning culture was rooted in a strong social welfarist perspective, which was characterised by spatial co-ordination with strong distributive and regulatory aspects. In terms of conceptions of space and place, there was a strong belief in planning's ability to control spatial change. This perspective had particularly underpinned various drafts of the 'Finger Plan' for the Greater Copenhagen Area, which to a large extent developed into being synonymous with strategic spatial planning at subnational scales in Denmark.

The conception of space as bounded came increasingly under pressure by the end of the 1990s, as a result of increased mobility and complexity in where people live and work. Inspired by European planning discourses of polycentricity, a new more dynamic urban settlement pattern of urban networks was discussed (Ministry of the Environment, 2000). However, these discussions were only limited reflected in national spatial policy maps, which continued to represent space as bounded entities, illustrated by concentring circles around the main cities in Denmark (see plate 1).

The changing governance structures in the second half of the 2000s provided an opportunity to spatially rethink the map of Denmark and break with the former spatial logic of central place theory at the national scale. The aim of the 2006 national planning report was to represent space 'more real' by highlighting the collapse of travel-to-work areas and two emerging functional conurbations. New spaces were imagined, transecting the administrative boundaries of the newly established regions, sharing similar characteristics to what Haughton et al. (2010) refer to as 'soft spaces with fuzzy boundaries'. On one hand, space was clearly understood as more fluid than previously. On the other hand, representations of space remained rather bounded with only the two white slightly transparent circles on the '*New Map of Denmark*' suggesting increasingly fuzzy boundaries (see plate 2).

The 2006 policy map illustrated a shift in national spatial politics, which had been on the way since the beginning of the 1990s. The spatial policy of balanced development across the entire Danish territory supported by the spatial logic of a hierarchy of cities and towns was at the national scale replaced by a new set of policies promoting two growth regions as drivers for international competitiveness. Even though the ministry planners took inspiration from European planning discourses on core and periphery, they were very much aware of the spatial politics in foregrounded two urban regions, while backgrounding the peripheral areas in Denmark. A former head of planning in the ministry explained how they had to be careful in the framing of the peripheral areas to avoid stigmatising these areas as "terrible places to live" (Interview, NØ, 2009, authors' translation). The peripheral areas were therefore framed as small-town regions and only marked by light shading on the map.

The '*New Map of Denmark*' became the point of departure for experiments with new forms of strategic spatial planning at the scale of the two urban regions presented on the map. Whilst the Ministry of the Environment had formulated its overall spatial policies for the two urban regions, these were to be specified through processes of spatial strategy-making in which the municipalities were allowed to participate. These processes can thus be understood as attempts to promote new soft forms of governance (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a; 2010; Haughton et al., 2010) intended to replace state responsibilities, allowing greater experimentation in how strategic spatial planning is carried out in practice. In this way, the two urban regions can be understood as new soft spaces for spatial policy-making, promoted as part of a wider neoliberal political agenda promoting new forms of strategic spatial planning.³ While the '*New Map of Denmark*' was successful in framing two growth regions as drivers for the Danish economy - a spatial logic that still survives in Danish

spatial planning - the spatial politics of concentration have recently sparked fierce political debate about the future of the peripheral areas. In the spring of 2010, the Danish Radio launched a two week debate, involving experts and politicians, on how to 'fix' Denmark's spatial inequalities. In the increasingly neoliberal political climate in Denmark, however, the government has become more reluctant to publicly present or debate its spatial policies. The most recent iteration of national spatial policy (Ministry of the Environment, 2010e) breaks with two decades of planning practice by containing no policy maps whatsoever. This seems to be a deliberate strategy from the ministry to suppress or avoid contestation over spatial politics.

The rest of this section analyses how strategy-making evolved in new planning spaces characterised by complex governance landscapes and contested spatial politics, and how these contexts influenced representations of space.

THE GREATER COPENHAGEN AREA: MAINTAINING THE LEGACY FROM THE PAST

The Greater Copenhagen Area has a long tradition for strategic spatial planning at the regional scale. The first 'Finger Plan' for the Greater Copenhagen Area was prepared in 1947, and since the urban development in the city region has been governed by various metropolitan institutions and their variants of the 'Finger Plan'. As part of the changing governance structures in the second half of the 2000s, the Ministry of the Environment took over the planning authority for Greater Copenhagen Area from the Greater Copenhagen Authority. In 2007, the Ministry of the Environment prepared a new plan entitled the '*Finger Plan 2007*' (Ministry of the Environment, 2007a) drawing heavily on the Greater Copenhagen Authority's regional plan from 2005. On the contrary to earlier spatial plans for the Greater Copenhagen Area, the '*Finger Plan 2007*' was given legal status as a national planning directive with the Minister of the Environment as main responsible.

The '*Finger Plan 2007*' places a strong emphasis on the planning heritage in the Greater Copenhagen Area in which the 'Finger Plan' represents the crown jewel of the family silver (Ministry of the Environment, 2007a). The spatial logic of the 'Finger Plan' is a hand with spread fingers. Urban development is located within the palm of the hand and along the fingers in urban corridors supported by a public transportation system, connecting the centre of Copenhagen to five old market towns, whilst the web between the fingers is reserved as recreational green areas serving as the city's lungs (see plate 3). The simple, unique, and easily understood graphical expression has played a key role in building support for the plan and spatial regulation in the

Greater Copenhagen ever since (Gaardmand, 1993).

The spatial logic has continuously been supplemented by ring roads to accommodate increasing volumes of car traffic and complexity of travel patterns, which no longer fitted into the original centre-periphery dichotomy. The spatial structure has also been supplemented by the principle of station proximity, which aims to ensure that all greater offices and service businesses are located within walking distance from train stations. This spatial logic has grown into policy attention in the *'Finger Plan 2007'* as a consequence of increased focus on sustainability and climate change agendas (Ministry of the Environment, 2007a).

In the *'Finger Plan 2007'* the spatial structure of the Greater Copenhagen Area is represented by concentric zones and urban corridors in a 21st century reinvention of the hand (see plate 3). The zones of the dense urban centre, urban corridors, and green wedges all represent the spatial heritage of the city region. The 2007 spatial representation breaks away from accurate representations of space, paying greater emphasis on the persuasive power of the overall spatial logic. In a way the spatial representation aspires to be the future icon of strategic spatial planning in the Greater Copenhagen Area, just like the *'Finger Plan'* has been since 1947.⁴

The *'Finger Plan'* has been subject to a similar critique as the metaphor of the green heart in the Netherlands (Van Eeten & Roe, 2000). As the fingers have grown thicker and longer than originally intended (Gaardmand, 1993), and cut across by new peripheral infrastructures, placing increasing pressure on the green web, it has been more and more difficult to detect the spatial structure of the hand in 'reality'. The representation of a Euclidean conception of space, and insistence on maintaining a sharp graphic divide between the green and built environment, have increasingly come under pressure as the relationship between the imagery and the experienced city region becomes strained. However, as in the Netherlands, any critique of a deeply culturally embedded spatial logic quickly turns into a critique of planning itself (Friedmann, 1993; Van Eeten & Roe, 2000). The spatial logic and its regulatory associations have so far survived the increasingly neoliberal political climate.

REGION ZEALAND: IMAGINING THE SPACE OUTSIDE GREATER COPENHAGEN

In 2008 the Ministry of the Environment initiated a spatial strategy-making process with the 17 municipalities in Region Zealand, the administrative region of Zealand, the regional transport company, and the Ministry of Transport in order to prepare a spatial framework for the surrounding area to the Greater Copenhagen Area. In 2010 a spatial framework was published (see plate 8), which divided the towns in the region

into a hierarchy from A to D according to the towns' 'transport efficiency' – a measure of each town's connectivity to national and regional public transportation systems and size in terms of inhabitants and workplaces (Ministry of the Environment, 2010a). The spatial framework suggested concentration of urban development towards towns highest in the hierarchy, and within these towns around the railway stations.

The spatial framework represents an interesting mix of conceptions of spatiality. The towns are interpreted as nodes in the public transportation network linking them mainly to the Greater Copenhagen Area. The value of each town is evaluated according to its connectivity. However, as connectivity is interpreted in terms of physical infrastructure, the spatial conception remains rooted in Euclidean geography. The same can be said for the rest of the spatial framework. In order to make sense of the nodes in the public transportation system, the planners sought inspiration from well-known spatial organising principles deeply rooted in Danish planning culture such as central place theory and concentration of urban development around railway stations.

Planners involved in the process explained how ranking towns according to their 'transport efficiency' was a conscious attempt to reduce the complex task of preparing an urban settlement structure to a rather objective task in which the spatial politics of the new governance landscape could be avoided. In the complex task of 'inventing' an urban structure for a new planning space, the planners found it useful to return to Euclidean conceptions of space and place in which each town's role in the urban structure could be calculated and objectively supported by facts. This approach meant that spatial politics were not allowed to play a dominant role in the process. A municipal planner summarised the approach as:

"You might say that the exercise was about keeping it rather physical/spatial during the analyses [...] so you were able to say where should we go if there should be a sustainable development. Then we have to make some assumptions that urban development takes place in the station towns, and we have to do this and this. You can say that the decisions you made then was an attempt to make it an objective analysis as possible [...] but in consideration of that we know it has to be bought back home, and therefore there are some preconditions in the project about that this project is not based on that we take inhabitants from each other." (Interview, AV, 2010, authors' translation)

The case of Region Zealand shows how the 'objective' spatial framework had to be politically negotiated in order to mobilise support. As a consequence, towns in the southern part of the region were included in the framework, despite not being connected to the rail network. A municipal planner highlighted how these towns' resident and employment structure was important for the southern municipalities, and that it would be politically unacceptable to 'close down' old well-functioning market towns because of their limited connectivity (Interview, AV, 2010). In this way, spatial politics played an important role in shaping not only conceptions of space and place, but also what should be represented on the map.

BUILDING REGIONAL IDENTITY IN THE EASTERN JUTLAND URBAN RIBBON

In 2008 the Ministry of the Environment initiated a spatial strategy-making process, similar to the process described in previous section, involving the 17 municipalities in the Eastern Jutland urban ribbon. Later that year an initial spatial vision was published, which mainly was concerned with building regional identity and placing Eastern Jutland in a European competitive context (Ministry of the Environment, 2008e).

The spatial vision was richly illustrated by theme maps *highlighting the urban region's characteristics in terms of* transport infrastructures, business structure, culture and leisure facilities etc. The spatial representations tried to capture the internal dynamics and potential synergies within the urban region together with connectivities to the outside world through the use of arrows (see plate 5). Connectivities and dynamics were both interpreted in terms of physical infrastructure and new potential synergies within and across various policy sectors, illustrating a relational understanding of spatiality. The fuzzy boundaries of Eastern Jutland articulated in the '*New Map of Denmark*' (Ministry of the Environment, 2006) grew 'harder', as it for practical reasons had to be defined who were in and out and could participate in the strategy-making process. As a consequence, the impressionistic fuzzy circle in the '*New Map of Denmark*' grew into an odd amoeba looking structure (see plate 5).

As the spatial vision was primarily concerned with building regional identity, it failed to treat potential contested spatial issues such as congestion and urban sprawl and prepare a spatial framework to guide the region's future urban development. These issues were therefore picked up in a second phase, where a small group of planners took the lead in preparing an overall spatial framework for Eastern Jutland. This work was highly contested by the remaining municipal representatives, who interpreted

the work as going too far in terms of distributing future urban development and growth between municipalities in the region, just as suggestions to take inspiration from the twin process in Region Zealand were rejected on the same basis. Without a strategy for how to handle the spatial politics in the process, the exercise of preparing a spatial framework became highly contested and in the end impossible. As a result, one municipality decided to leave the processes, while others successfully pushed for a continuous watering down of the content in the spatial framework. A former municipal technical director explained this situation as:

“... and this is also the problem with these 17 municipalities, they are very different, there are large municipalities, there are small municipalities, there are municipalities along the [transport] corridor, and there are municipalities located more peripheral from the corridor. And they could see if it turned into the model of the Zealand project, then there would be different groups of towns. Some towns would be intended for growth and other towns would more be surrounding towns, and how much growth could they get?” (Interview, HJB, 2010, authors’ translation)

Instead of an overall spatial framework, a set of recommendations were finally published in 2010 (Ministry of the Environment, 2010d). The recommendations included a spatial representation of the Eastern Jutland equivalent to the Copenhagen principle of concentrating urban development around nodes in the public transport network (see plate 6). The spatial representation avoids any spatial references and similarity with the spatial structures of Eastern Jutland, and remains as such an image of a spatial logic rather than an impressionistic depiction of the Eastern Jutland space. Planners involved in the Eastern Jutland process highlighted how the spatial representation should be understood as the lowest common denominator between the municipalities, and how the spatial politics of the governance landscape effectively had ensured that no spatial policies or representations of space would give a sense of winners and losers or indicate distribution of growth.

THE SPATIAL POLITICS IN REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACE

In this section, we synthesise the findings from our analysis of conceptions of space and place in Danish strategic spatial planning and how spatial politics influence representations of space, returning to the issues raised in the planning literature.

CONCEPTIONS OF SPACE AND PLACE IN DANISH STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING

Spatial representations illustrating spatial policies are an integral part of Danish planning culture at all scales. These representations have traditionally been built around a few core spatial logics such as hierarchies of cities and towns, urban and rural relations (including limiting urban sprawl), and concentration of urban development around nodes in the public transportation system. All rest within a Euclidean conception of spatiality, and a long held belief in planners' ability to control spatial change. Questioning these spatial logics comes close to questioning the very entity of strategic spatial planning. As a consequence, planners often return to well-known spatial logics when trying to make sense of spatial structures in new planning spaces. The legacy of the 'Finger Plan' contributes to set a precedent for contemporary experiments with strategic spatial planning.

These spatial logics are deeply embedded in a rational and comprehensive planning system, which recently has experienced substantial changes as a consequence of changing governance structures. This has also created a pressure on planners to modify their conceptions of space and place. These changes have so far been most significant on the national scale in the Ministry of the Environment's '*New Map of Denmark*', articulating two urban regions with fuzzy boundaries. The two circles illustrate an emerging awareness of the fluidity of space and that spatial planning no longer can be limited to administrative units, but has to take place across administrative boundaries in 'soft spaces' (Houghton et al., 2010) in order to be meaningful. This is the rationality underpinning the two experiments with spatial strategy-making in Region Zealand and Eastern Jutland. The '*New Map of Denmark*' does, however, not appear as fuzzy as many of the spatial representations of the newly devolved nations in the UK (Davoudi & Strange, 2009).

This emerging relational understanding of spatiality has only partly been transferred down to subnational planning scales. While relational conceptions of space and place dominated the process in Eastern Jutland, a Euclidean understanding of spatiality came to dominate the process of developing an urban settlement structure in Region Zealand. The 'Finger Plan' in Greater Copenhagen remains somewhere in between the two extremes, as a fuzzy spatial representation was used to build support for Euclidean spatial logics. We see therefore not an unequivocal picture of Danish conceptions of space and place. Rather than a true dedication to one conception of spatiality, we see, in line with Healey (2004), a discursive melting pot full of various spatial conceptions and logics. The selection and sense of appropriateness of certain

Table 8.2: Conceptions of space and place in Danish strategic spatial planning

	National Planning Report 2006	The Greater Copenhagen Area	Region Zealand	Eastern Jutland
<i>Conception of space and place</i>	Space defined by administrative boundaries and commuter patterns Awareness of fuzzy boundaries Spatial change can be controlled	Space defined by boundaries of former metropolitan institutions Spatial change can be controlled	Space as objectively measured and politically negotiated Spatial change can be controlled	Places as connected by infrastructures and potential synergies Spatial identity created through strategy-making Spatial change can be controlled
<i>Spatial logics</i>	Core – periphery Urban regions with fuzzy boundaries	Centralisation of urban development (palm and fingers) Centralisation around nodes in transport network	Decentralisation of urban development through hierarchy of towns Centralisation around nodes in transport network	Centralisation around nodes in transport network
<i>Time and future</i>	Map of Denmark after 2007	Spatial framework from 2007 and onwards	Framework towards 2030	No indication of time
<i>Visual representation</i>	Policy map	Iconic spatial framework	Spatial framework	Image of spatial logic

spatial conceptions and logics seems to rest more in a specific planning culture than in a particular conception of spatiality. Table 8.2 presents an overview over conceptions of space and place in Danish strategic spatial planning found in the four processes of strategy-making analysed in this paper.

We found that the Euclidean conception of space and place was most dominant among ministry planners. The Ministry of the Environment's primary function is to supervise and regulate spatial planning at lower tiers. The ministry planners have therefore a clear interest in encouraging specific and binding spatial frameworks to ease integration with the existing planning system. Dühr (2007) found a similar connection between the level of abstraction in spatial representations and spatial strategies' legal status in her case studies of spatial representations in Dutch, German and English spatial strategies. As noted earlier, there seems to be a strong connection between planning rationalities and conceptions of space and place. Specific (less fuzzy) spatial representations have clear regulatory associations, as one ministry planner explains:

"What is also exciting is how specific this can get, because where we really commit each other, it is if we draw the maps. And the light model, you might say, is where you agree on overall planning principles for Eastern Jutland, such as for example an Eastern Jutland principle of station proximity, which also includes bus connections and light railway connections [...] So it is exciting how far we can get and what the aim of the future work will be. We have to clarify that. Are we at map drawing level or are we at planning principles level? [...] And the question is also what the Ministry of Transport needs. They probably need some far more concrete statements. [...] So I believe, if we are to bring something useful to this work, then it is the specific [map], but it is also the most difficult to agree on." (Interview, JP, 2009, authors' translation)

SPATIAL POLITICS IN DANISH STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING

As illustrated in the quotation above, specific spatial representations do not only have clear regulatory associations, they are also potentially more difficult to agree on. The strategic spatial planning processes in Region Zealand and Eastern Jutland illustrate how spatial politics had significant impacts on the nature of the spatial representations prepared in these processes. Planners involved in strategy-making were aware of these issues and sought in different ways to avoid the spatial politics of

the processes they were part of.

The ministry planners were aware of the spatial politics of using a core – periphery dichotomy in the *'New Map of Denmark'*, and sought to mitigate potential contestation by framing peripheral areas as small town regions and only marking them by light shading. While the *'New Map of Denmark'* has been powerful in shaping subsequent processes of spatial strategy-making at subnational scales, the core – periphery dichotomy has recently sparked fierce political debate in the Danish media. As the evidence from the ESDP process also reveals, the most contested spatial politics arise around spatial representations of core vs. periphery and economically strong vs. weak regions (Dühr, 2007; Faludi & Waterhout, 2002; Zonneveld, 2000). The concern with handling potentially volatile spatial politics seems to have caused an increasing 'fear' of spatial representations in Danish spatial planning. In the most recent spatial policy from 2010 (Ministry of the Environment, 2010e), the Ministry of the Environment has decided not to include an overall policy map, breaking with two decades of planning practice.

In Region Zealand, planners tried to keep spatial politics outside the strategy-making process by reducing the task of preparing a spatial framework to a rather factual and 'objective' level. This attempt to depoliticise the process and hide behind neutrality, technicality and objectivity of positivism has also been observed in other spatial strategy-making processes. In line with practice in the UK (Davoudi & Strange, 2009), the planners in Region Zealand turned to well-known spatial logics in an attempt to reduce the disorderly world of relational geography into well-ordered and neatly nested spatial imaginaries. These spatial imaginaries were then later politically negotiated in order to mobilise political support for the spatial strategy.

In Eastern Jutland, planners found it even more challenging to handle the spatial politics of the new governance landscape. Initial consensus built around a spatial vision disappeared quickly in the processes of preparing a spatial framework. The spatial politics camouflaged in the initial fuzzy spatial representations resurfaced as the process continued. The work of a small group of planners was rejected as being too regulatory and favouring the major cities. Once again the spatial politics had to be camouflaged in the spatial representation. In this way, the spatial politics of the urban region effectively ensured that no spatial policies or representations of space would give a sense of winners or losers or indicate future distribution of growth.

The Danish processes of strategic spatial planning demonstrate how fuzzy spatial representations are regarded as an effective means to detach spatial planning from its regulatory associations and its often contested distributive characteristics. We

have seen how spatial politics have significant impacts on representations of space, as these are being politically negotiated in mobilisation exercises. Furthermore, we have illustrated how fuzzy spatial representations and concepts from relational geography are used to camouflage spatial politics and depoliticise processes of spatial strategy-making. We therefore suggest that critical attention needs to be paid to the ways in which relational geography is being mobilised in practice in attempts to build consensus around spatial strategies, and to the transformative potentials of planning imagery used in such ways.

CONCLUSIONS

Contemporary planning theory has welcomed relational geography's entry into planning practice (Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Healey, 2004, 2006b, 2007), as a means to introduce more deliberative and space-sensitive planning approaches. In this paper, we stress a need to maintain a critical stance towards the introduction of a relational paradigm in planning, as relational spatial concepts might easily be appropriated in support of contemporary neoliberal transformations of strategic spatial planning. Such concept 'transfer' has been noticed in the academic debate, but has yet to be put under critical scrutiny. Healey (2004) notes for example how relational concepts are easily open to capture by traditional spatial understandings, seriously weakening the power of a spatial vocabulary. Here, we add that new spatial logics may also appropriate relational concepts. We argue that spatial representations must be understood as products of the interactions of particular planning cultures, particular ways of thinking about space and place, and particular spatial politics. This third dimension of spatial politics has not so far been given sufficient attention in the theoretical debate on relational geography. Without critical analysis of the spatial politics enmeshed in representations of space, these representations' persuasive and transformative potentials are not easily grasped and may well be misunderstood. It seems crucial that planning research into the role of spatial representations should not overlook the particular, situated power relations that surround their production.

What are the implications for planning practice? In some cases spatial representations may play an important role in mediating and communicating spatial politics, particularly where these politics are foregrounded in spatial strategy-making processes. Here, fuzzy spatial representations and representational vagueness might play an important role in facilitating collaborative strategy-making by allowing diverse

potential interpretations, and enriching planning deliberations. In other cases, spatial politics are regarded by actors as obstructive for spatial strategy-making. Here, fuzzy spatial representations and representational vagueness may be deployed as a conscious political strategy to blur the spatial politics of strategy-making and depoliticise strategic spatial planning processes. In these cases, relationality, relational spatial concepts and fuzzy spatial representations can play an important role in depoliticising strategy-making processes. In Denmark such a depoliticisation is taking place at the national scale, where planning responsibilities are being down-scaled to subnational scales as part of wider neoliberal changes across scales of governance. At stake in these processes is a particular Danish planning culture underpinned by a strong social welfarist perspective, where spatial representations have played an important role in communicating distributive and balanced spatial policies. The 2010 national planning report portends a change in Danish strategic spatial planning in which the significance of spatial representations as persuasive devices is diminishing.

NOTES

- 1 In chapter 9, I explore this issue further by analysing how policy agendas are being shaped in soft spaces, and how agenda-setting becomes enmeshed in spatial politics of new governance landscapes.
- 2 In this paper, I explore the second sub-research question: 'how is space being re-imagined in the interplay between the spatial politics of new governance landscapes and innovations in the use of spatial representations in contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning?' The analysis draws on a framework highlighting the key characteristics of Euclidean and relational geography (table 8.1) and different ways of looking for the spatial politics in representations of space, which are the two sub-themes in the paper, see table 1.1.
- 3 In chapter 9, I argue that the new urban regions articulated in the '*New Map of Denmark*' can be understood as new soft spaces in Danish spatial planning, and that the agenda-setting in the soft spaces tend to prioritise economic development at the expense of wider planning responsibilities, reflecting a neoliberal political philosophy.
- 4 This is true for the main spatial representation in the '*Finger Plan 2007*' (plate 3). However, the '*Finger Plan*' contains also more accurate, Euclidean spatial representations (see plate 4).

SOFT SPACES AS VEHICLES FOR NEOLIBERAL TRANSFORMATIONS OF STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING?

This paper was submitted in its current form to Environment and Planning C, in September 2011. The paper was also presented as the European Urban Research Association (EURA) conference in Copenhagen in June 2011. The notes are not part of the original paper, but have added for the purpose of linking the paper to other parts of the PhD thesis.

ABSTRACT

This paper analyses how policy agendas are being shaped in new soft spaces emerging in Danish spatial planning at subnational scales, and how policy-making in these soft spaces seek to influence formal planning arenas. The paper demonstrates how the new soft planning spaces in Danish spatial planning primarily are concerned with promoting policy agendas centred on economic development, whilst doing limited work in filling in the gaps between formal scales of planning, as envisaged in the planning literature. Instead, soft spaces seem to add to the increasing pressures on statutory spatial planning, being used as vehicles for neoliberal transformations of strategic spatial planning. This paper therefore argues for a need to maintain a critical stance towards the emergence of soft spaces in spatial planning.

INTRODUCTION

In the planning literature, there has recently been much discussion on the new ‘soft spaces with fuzzy boundaries’ emerging in British spatial planning (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2010; Haughton et al., 2010; Metzger, 2011). Here, the emergence of soft spaces in spatial planning has been associated with the transformations of spatial planning in the UK under the New Labour Government, which, with a point of departure in neoliberal political agendas, promotes a particular form of spatial planning primarily concerned with devolution, policy integration, effectiveness, and policy delivery (Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Haughton et al., 2010; Morphet, 2011). The soft spaces are shaped by New Labour’s pragmatic view on spatial planning, focusing on ‘what works’ in terms of implementation and policy delivery (Allmendinger, 2011; Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009b).

So far critical reflections on the implications of the increasing amount of spatial strategy-making being done in soft spaces have focused on the lack of transparency and potential democratic deficits of contemporary spatial planning (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010; Metzger, 2011). Limited critical attention has been paid to how policy agendas are being shaped in soft spaces, and how these agendas seek to influence formal planning arenas. These questions seem to be particularly relevant the current neoliberal political climate characterising many European countries, including social welfare states such as Denmark.

In continental Europe, discussions on the emergence of new informal planning spaces have so far followed European planning discourses on territorial cohesion and cross-border cooperation (see e.g. de Vries, 2008; Fabbro & Haselsberger, 2009). Limited attention has been paid to how the concept of ‘soft spaces with fuzzy boundaries’ corresponds to contemporary European strategic spatial planning practices. This paper seeks to broaden the soft space debate in a European context by offering an account of the emergence of soft spaces in Danish spatial planning. This paper analyses how spatial strategy-making is carried out at the scale of two new soft spaces emerging in Danish spatial planning at subnational scales. In these soft spaces, the paper explores how policy agendas are being shaped and how these agendas seek to influence formal planning arenas. The central argument running through this paper is how soft spaces in neoliberal political climates might be used as vehicles for neoliberal transformations of strategic spatial planning. The paper therefore argues for a need to maintain a critical stance towards the emergence of soft spaces in spatial planning.

The definition of what constitutes a soft space remains rather ambiguous in the planning literature, despite recent attempts to clarify its main characteristics (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010). Drawing on the soft space literature, I offer in this paper a pragmatic working definition, which draws into attention two of the main characteristics of soft spaces. Here, I understand soft spaces as a mix of i) new spatial imaginations promoting new informal planning spaces located outside the formal planning system and formal scales of planning, and ii) new networked forms of governance seeking to work outside the rigidities of statutory planning. The new soft spaces reflect, on one hand, the emerging recognition within planning theory and planning practice that spatial planning does not necessarily fit existing bounded administrative units, planning frameworks or formal planning scales (Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2010), but increasingly has to respond to the multiple 'spaces of flows' (Castells, 1996), which seen from a relational perspective make up urban areas today (Graham & Healey, 1999; Healey, 2004, 2006b, 2007). On the other hand, soft spaces are seen as new platforms for working across policy sectors and administrative boundaries, bringing together strategic actors at the scale of real-world problems and opportunities (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a; Haughton et al., 2010), reflecting what Healey (2007) refers to as a restless search for policy integration and joined-up government at the scale of urban regions.

The planning literature stresses how the emergence of soft spaces should be understood as an outcome of the drawbacks of spatial planning rather than an example of spatial planning in practice (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009b). In this paper, I take a different perspective, examining too what extent we might understand soft spaces as examples of a new neoliberal version of strategic spatial planning in practice. Healey (2007) argues how strategic planning efforts at times have to move away from formal planning arenas in order to destabilise existing policy discourses and practices. Even though Healey (2007) does not refer explicitly to soft spaces, we might understand soft spaces as particular episodes of spatial strategy-making aiming at destabilising existing governance practices and planning cultures, or at least supplementing and complementing these practices and cultures in significant ways. This search for new opportunities for strategic thinking and breaking away from pre-existing working patterns by working outside the formal requirements and rigidities of statutory planning is what seems to characterise soft spaces. Whilst Healey (2007) welcomes these efforts to destabilise existing planning practices and cultures as new opportunities for creative strategic thinking, this paper stresses a need for critical examination of how soft spaces potentially open up for neoliberal transformations

of strategic spatial planning. I suggest that such an analysis needs to pay attention to how policy agendas are shaped in soft spaces, and how these agendas seek to influence formal planning arenas.¹

The paper proceeds as follows. First, the theoretical foundation for the paper is laid out, providing a conceptual understanding of the emergence of soft spaces in spatial planning, and setting out an analytical framework for the analysis of agenda-setting in soft spaces. Second, the context of the emergence of soft spaces in Danish spatial planning is laid out, before two episodes of strategy-making in soft spaces at the subnational scales in Denmark are presented. Following from this a synthesis of the research findings provides a point of departure for a critical discussion on the potential implications of the emergence of soft spaces in Danish spatial planning. Finally, the concluding section provides reflections on how soft spaces might be used as vehicles for neoliberal transformations of strategic spatial planning.

THE EMERGENCE OF SOFT SPACES IN SPATIAL PLANNING

Geographical scales were traditionally understood as territorial containers arranged in nested hierarchies, determining the geographical boundaries of state spatial strategies and state spatial projects. Much of recent state theory breaks with this understanding of spaces and scales as fixed entities, stressing how state spatial configurations are actively produced and reproduced through socio-political struggles (Brenner, 2004a, 2004b). The reproduction of state spatiality takes place through processes of state re-territorialisation and rescaling in a search for new 'scalar fixes' (Brenner, 2004a) or 'spatio-temporal fixes' (Jessop, 2000). The state theory literature highlights how the evolution of state spatiality is strongly path-dependent, shaped by political geographies established through time, producing a complex patchwork of former and contemporary geo-historical structures and socio-political struggles (Brenner, 2004a, 2004b). Processes of state re-territorialisation and rescaling do not entail simple redistributions of powers from one scale to another, or the total disappearance of some scales as they are superseded by others. Instead, a more complex picture of state spatiality emerges in which different scales and spaces co-exist rather than being organised in nested hierarchies.

In this increasingly complex and fragmented governance landscape, no single actor or scale has the power or capacity to shape the spatial structures of society on their own. Policy delivery becomes dependent on effective coordination between various

policy sectors across various scales. This has led to much discussion on the state's role in spatial planning. Some theorists have argued that contemporary processes of state re-territorialisation and rescaling have led to a 'hollowing out' of the state (Jessop, 1997), whilst others highlight how the state continues to play a dominant role by promoting new state spaces as key sites for economic development and policy making (Brenner, 2004a). Similarly, it has been noted how the state continues to shape new institutional forms and strategy-making processes at lower scales by setting out the rules of these experiments. Rather than a 'hollowing out' of the state, we seem to be witnessing a transformation of how the state seeks to pursue its aims, increasingly characterised by the state acting as metagovernor of processes of 'filling in' at subnational and regional scales (Goodwin et al., 2005; Jessop, 2003; Jones et al., 2005).

It is in this context, we can begin to understand the new soft spaces emerging in spatial planning in the UK and beyond. In the UK much attention has recently been paid to how contemporary processes of state re-territorialisation, rescaling, and devolution have been paralleled by new soft spaces emerging in-between formal scales of planning (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2007, 2009a, 2010; Haughton et al., 2010). In the planning literature, the new soft spaces have been conceptualised as filling in the gaps between formal planning structures and processes, providing the glue that binds formal scales of planning together (Haughton et al., 2010). Here, soft spaces have been associated with the normative British state project of spatial planning, which promotes a particular form of spatial planning primarily concerned with devolution, policy integration, effectiveness, and policy delivery (Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Haughton et al., 2010; Morphet, 2011). The soft spaces are shaped by New Labour's pragmatic view on spatial planning, focusing on 'what works' in terms of implementation and policy delivery (Allmendinger, 2011; Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009b).

Here, it is important to note how New Labour's rationale behind soft spaces in the UK was transformed from functional spaces for policy integration and coordination to vehicles for policy delivery and growth in the aftermaths of the global credit crunch (Allmendinger, 2011). This transformation of the rationale of soft spaces reflects the flexible nature of soft spaces, which "seem to be defined in ways that are deliberately fluid and fuzzy in the sense that they can be amended and shaped easily to reflect different interests and challenges" (Haughton et al., 2010, p.52). This brings into attention the importance of paying attention to the power dynamics embedded within the social construction of soft spaces and the problems and opportunities

empowered by a given scale. As Purcell (2006, pp.1921-1922) remind us:

“... it is dangerous to make any assumption about any scale. Scales are not independent entities with pre-given characteristics. Instead, they are socially constructed strategies to achieve particular ends. Therefore, any scale or scalar strategy can result in any outcome. [...] All depends on the agenda of those empowered by a given scalar strategy.”

It also brings into attention how policy agendas are being shaped and reshaped at the scale of soft spaces. As Healey (2007) notes, spatial strategy-making consists of filtering and sorting processes in which actors fight for policy attention. The planning literature highlights how episodes of strategic spatial planning are highly selective processes, oriented towards specific issues that matter to the actors involved in the strategy-making processes (Albrechts, 2004; Healey, 2007). The selection of critical issues to work on is emphasised as a very delicate matter, which often requires the prospect of win-win situations (Albrechts, 2001, 2004). In this sense, the design of soft spaces and the filtering of actors and policy agendas seem to be crucial for the potential impact of the soft spaces on formal planning arenas. Exclusion seems to be a presupposition for win-win situations to be established (Connelly & Richardson, 2004).

In the planning literature, there are many examples of how policy agendas related to economic development and investments in transport infrastructures are more likely to be promoted over issues of distribution of growth in spatial strategy-making processes (Albrechts, 2001; Dühr, 2007; Hajer, 2000; Harris & Hooper, 2004; Jensen & Richardson, 2003; Salet et al., 2003; van Duinen, 2004; Zonneveld, 2000), as the latter issue is deeply embedded in spatial politics.² These characteristics seem in particular to apply to soft spaces, as they are characterised by attempts to short-circuit the formal requirements and move beyond the rigidities of statutory planning in order to facilitate development. As the soft space literature recognises, there is a risk that this is done at the expense of wider planning responsibilities. There seems therefore to be ambivalence about the role of soft spaces in spatial planning in the planning literature:

“Soft space approaches can be a useful part of the strategic planning repertoire in terms of facilitating development and creating competitive advantage, in part, through minimising regulations or short-circuiting and partnering developments through formal processes. The danger though is that they might be used to sidestep wider responsibilities, not

least those relating to the social justice and environmental aspects of sustainable development.” (Haughton et al., 2010, p.241)

This brings into attention the links between soft spaces and formal planning arenas, and raises questions about how soft spaces seek to influence statutory planning practices. As suggested in the introduction, we might understand soft spaces as particular strategy-making episodes, where strategic spatial planning moves beyond formal planning arenas in attempts to destabilise existing practices and structures. Here, Healey (2007) highlights how maintaining close links to formal planning arenas plays an important role in building political legitimacy for informal spatial strategy-making. Whilst Haughton et al. (2010) seem rather optimistic about soft spaces’ future role in spatial planning, others remain more pessimistic highlighting the continuous tensions and clashes between soft spaces and formal planning arenas, as the latter continue to play the predominant role in shaping decision-making processes and planning practices (Brownill & Carpenter, 2009; Greenwood & Newman, 2010).

Here, it seems that the significance of soft spaces is overstated in the planning literature, and the soft space proponents do acknowledge that only “few of the claimed local delivery successes appeared to stand up to detailed critical scrutiny” (Haughton et al., 2010, p.243). Furthermore, it seems that some form of coincidence is required between soft spaces and institutional areas for soft spaces to have an impact:

“... where such areas coincide there can be a reinforcement of activity through focused resources and consensus. Where such areas do not coincide (for example, where there is no overlap between functional planning areas and institutionally defined subregions) then there can be the loss of development momentum and a deficit of resources and consensus.” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009a, p.626)

In the above discussion, I have highlighted how recent processes of state re-territorialisation and rescaling have produced new soft spaces of multi-level spatial metagovernance. I have highlighted how paying attention to the agenda-setting in soft spaces and the links between informal and formal planning arenas is important for understanding the potential implications of soft spaces on strategic spatial planning. In the next section, I seek to explore these issues further through two episodes of spatial strategy-making in soft spaces in Denmark.

SOFT SPACES IN DANISH SPATIAL PLANNING

Denmark has a strong tradition for strategic spatial planning rooted in a rational comprehensive planning approach with a strong social-welfarist perspective. This perspective on strategic spatial planning has remained rather stable, but has recently come under pressure. Denmark has recently experienced comprehensive processes of state re-territorialisation and rescaling of planning powers. Whilst these processes traditionally are understood as a consequence of globalisation processes (Brenner 2004a, 2004b), the Danish structural reform in 2007 seems to follow a different rationale (Andersen, 2008). The literature stresses how the Danish reform lacked a clear logic (Andersen, 2008), and best can be understood as a number of more or less irrational and coincidental decision-making processes (Mouritzen, 2004), in which the outline of the reform was sketched well before identifying the problems the reform was intended to solve (Bundgaard & Vrangbæk, 2007). The reform can thus best be understood as the liberal and conservative coalition government's attempt to signal political vigour, whilst at the same time dismantling large parts of the public sector, including spatial planning.

Following the election of a liberal and conservative coalition government in 2001 and the structural reform in 2007, a series of changes were implemented in the Ministry of the Environment, including abolition of the Agency for National Spatial Planning, decentralisation of the Ministry of the Environment into national environment centres, and creation of the more sector-oriented Danish Nature Agency, which amongst other things also became responsible for national spatial planning. On the regional level, the counties and the Greater Copenhagen Authority were abolished, reducing the Danish planning system from a three-tier municipal-county-state system to a two-tier system, consisting of municipalities and the state. where, the majority of the regional planning powers had been transferred to the municipalities, which were merged into larger units to accommodate these new tasks.

On the regional scale, five new administrative regions were created with the primary task of running the public hospitals. The regions were also given the task of preparing new non-regulatory regional spatial development plans aiming at encouraging local economic development. This task was supported by newly established regional economic growth forums consisting of public and private stakeholders. The division of tasks between the regional and municipal scale in terms of spatial planning was not clear cut after the reform, as the intended content and function of the new regional spatial development plans remained rather vaguely formulated in the planning

act. This has resulted in a rather messy governance structure in which the regions' role in spatial planning remains ambiguous. In an attempt to prevent the new administrative regions from developing a significant role in regional development planning, Local Government Denmark established new platforms for cross-municipal cooperation and policy-making at the scale of the administrative regions. These new local government regional councils act almost as counter platforms to the formal regional planning arenas, and have as such become important political platforms for continuous municipal contestation of the administrative regions' role in spatial planning (Sørensen et al., 2011).

In these ways, the changing governance structures in Denmark have resulted in an increasingly complex governance landscape in which the formal planning hierarchy has to some extent been replaced by a more polycentric scalar configuration, in which the internal relationships are continuously being negotiated (Sørensen et al., 2011). In this new highly decentralised spatial configuration no single tier has decisive planning powers, and as a consequence strategic spatial planning above the scale of local government has to take place through informal cooperation or governance networks.

The changing governance structures were seen by the Ministry of the Environment as an opportunity to re-imagine the map of Denmark. The administrative regions were not regarded as appropriate scales of strategic spatial planning, as they did not have sufficient planning powers and their boundaries did not match the contours of two emerging metropolitan regions. The ministry decided therefore to initiate new informal episodes of spatial strategy-making at the scale of the two metropolitan regions, turning these into new soft spaces for spatial planning (Ministry of the Environment, 2006). The new soft spaces were at the same time regarded as important platforms for the state to maintain influence on municipal planning and ensure that local growth ambitions were not prioritised at the expense of wider planning commitments.

The rest of this section analyses two episodes of spatial strategy-making at the scale of new soft spaces at subnational scales in Denmark.³ The analysis explores how policy agendas are being shaped in the soft spaces, and how these agendas seek to influence formal planning arenas. The analysis is informed by document analysis of key planning documents prepared through these processes, together with in-depth interviews with national, regional, and municipal planners involved in the planning episodes. The interviewees were among other things asked questions about the nature of informal strategic spatial planning at the new planning scales (soft spaces)

in Denmark and its wider implications for strategic spatial planning in the future.

THE SOFT SPACE OF THE GREATER COPENHAGEN AREA AND ZEALAND

The Ministry of the Environment's national planning report from 2006 stresses how the entire island of Zealand is developing into a coherent labour market (Ministry of the Environment, 2006). Previously, strategic spatial planning has been limited to the Greater Copenhagen Area, which has a strong tradition for spatial planning at the regional scale going back to the first 'Finger Plan' from 1947, whilst spatial planning beyond the municipal level in the rest of Zealand mainly has been limited to statutory county planning.

As part of the structural reform, the Greater Copenhagen Authority was abolished and planning authority for the Greater Copenhagen Area was transferred to the Ministry of the Environment, which laid out a spatial framework for the Greater Copenhagen Area in a planning directive entitled the '*Finger Plan 2007*' (Ministry of the Environment, 2007a). The planning directive was a contested political issue in the negotiations on the structural reform, as it contradicted the liberal and conservative government's aspirations of abolishing regional planning. Expanding the spatial framework to encompass a larger part of the island of Zealand was thus not considered a political viable option. Instead, the Ministry of the Environment proposed to supplement the '*Finger Plan 2007*' with an informal spatial framework for the rest of the Zealand, prepared in cooperation between the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Transport, the administrative region of Zealand (Region Zealand), and the 17 municipalities in the region. The scale of the strategy-making process was adjusted to include the entire Region Zealand, as the region saw potential synergies with its regional spatial development planning. Whilst this on one hand created a messy situation in which six municipalities, already being regulated by the '*Finger Plan 2007*', were included in the process, it also opened up for synergies with the local government regional council in Zealand. The local government regional council became an important platform for political discussions on the progress in the strategy-making process, and the close link to the local government regional council provided the necessary required political legitimacy for the soft space.

The spatial strategy-making process in Region Zealand was established by the Ministry of the Environment as a platform for linking transport planning and urban development planning. The aim was to prepare an informal spatial framework for urban development which would support investments in transport infrastructure, mainly railways. Inspiration was taking from the Greater Copenhagen Area, where

the 'Finger Plan' for decades had regulated urban development, ensuring a strong foundation for the public transportation system. The municipalities and Region Zealand saw, on the other hand, the soft space as a potential lobby platform for future investments in transport infrastructure. A regional planner explained:

"So as I see it, the Zealand project began in reality just as a wish to realise some of these priorities [on transport infrastructure] in a dialogue with the state. Well, get this influence on how the prioritisations of national infrastructure should be. One of the means to get influence was the municipalities' promise to work with location policy in different ways." (Interview, RL, 2010, author's translation)

The municipalities hoped that by voluntarily subscribing to an overall spatial framework, they would be entitled to investments in transport infrastructure in a win-win scenario. However, the Ministry of Transport saw the soft space as an opportunity to make sure that some of the investments that already had been passed by the parliament in the government's Green Transport Policy (Danish Government, 2009) would pay off. A planner from the Danish Transport Authority stressed:

"It has not been a dialogue project about big infrastructure investments. It has been a dialogue project about creating common consensus about the overall principles for urban development. But it is clear that what is the focus in the municipalities among the regional and local politicians, that is, of course how many national investments you can attract to a particular area." (Interview, JJ, 2010, author's translation)

The Ministry of Transport did not regard the soft space as an appropriate platform for discussions on future investments in transport infrastructure, as these had to involve the Ministry of Finance and eventually be passed by the parliament. This was felt as a lack of commitment to the process by the municipalities, who made it clear that they would not restrict their urban development without being offered something in return.

"... the idea was that the partners committed themselves to this. And that includes also the state. And the state has really not, they have been part of the project [...] but the state has not contributed with a binding agreement on then we also support this. They don't do that. They contribute with what has been approved beforehand. It is clear that the municipalities are not interested in saying okay, then we

commit ourselves to do this, but we do not know whether the state will contribute with anything, and that upsets the balance.” (Interview, AV, 2010, author’s translation)

The soft space of the Greater Copenhagen Area and Zealand demonstrates how informal strategy-making was initiated in Region Zealand to supplemented statutory strategic spatial planning in the Greater Copenhagen Area. Whilst the soft space only had limited success in terms of bridging transport planning and urban development planning, it proved to be a useful cross-municipal lobby platform for investments in transport infrastructure. The process was also successful in terms of preparing an informal spatial framework, where the implementation to a large extent depends on future municipal commitment.

THE SOFT SPACE OF THE EASTERN JUTLAND URBAN RIBBON

While the case of the Greater Copenhagen Area and Zealand was a matter of supplementing the ‘Finger Plan’ by soft space planning in the rest of Zealand, the challenge in Eastern Jutland was to build governance capacity at a new scale from scratch. Eastern Jutland was for the first time articulated as an urban region in the Ministry of the Environment’s 2006 national planning report, which highlighted an emerging functional conurbation along the urban corridor from Kolding to Randers with more than one million inhabitants (Ministry of the Environment, 2006). The proposed urban region transected not only the boundaries of two administrative regions, it also encompassed the geo-historical structures of two former counties around which extensive cross-municipal cooperation had been built up over decades. In the northern part of the urban region, Denmark’s second largest city Aarhus and its surrounding municipalities had built up a tradition of informal cooperation around spatial planning issues. In the southern part of the region, six municipalities had embarked on an extensive municipal cooperation project going back to the early 1990s, making up what in Denmark is referred to as the ‘Triangle Area’. The cooperation has advanced to a level where the municipalities in 2009 produced a common municipal plan. These former and contemporary political-administrative structures continued to play an important role in shaping the municipalities’ sense of belonging, which often clashed with the state’s new spatial logic of an urban ribbon based roughly on travel-to-work patterns.

The strategy-making process in the Eastern Jutland soft space had a similar organisational setup to the process in Region Zealand, with the important difference

that the two administrative regions represented in Eastern Jutland did only follow the process on the sideline.⁴ The Eastern Jutland soft space sought to promote a different spatial logic than the administrative regions and local government regional councils. The 17 municipalities in the process had therefore to develop a cross-municipal political platform on their own. In many ways, this political platform developed into being a competing platform for cross-municipal policy-making to the local government regional councils. As the significance of the local government regional council grew, they seemed to outcompete the Eastern Jutland soft space. A municipal director highlighted how the ad hoc soft space was being outdone by more formalised platforms:

"But where are the resources? Well, where is there a formal organisation, some people employed, a politically elected leader who can invite to meetings and things like that? That is in the regions. It is not in the Eastern Jutland urban ribbon. There is no secretariat. [...] So you need some formalisation. [...] that is the exciting in [...] the discussion of formal fixed cooperation forums contra ad hoc, how significant is it? And I would say that the creation of the regions is significant in the way that the local government regional councils also are organised according to the regions. That is, I meet for example regularly with my colleagues [in other municipalities], the mayors meet regularly. Well, there are some connections, where you get to know each other, you network. It is easier to build a network through this way than across the regional boundaries." (Interview, NA, 2010, author's translation)

These competing scales for cross-municipal cooperation were significant for the transport infrastructure lobbying in Eastern Jutland. Just as in Region Zealand, the Ministry of the Environment wanted to introduce an overall spatial framework linking transport planning and urban development planning, whilst the municipalities were more interested in lobbying for investments in transport infrastructure. However, due to the historical divide between the north and the south part of the region, which had been carried on to the local government regional councils, the municipalities in the Eastern Jutland soft space were unable to agree on which investments in transport infrastructure to prioritise in their lobby work. As a consequence, the municipalities had little interest in subscribing to a spatial framework at the scale of Eastern Jutland, and gradually the soft space seemed to dissolve.

Furthermore, it seems that some municipalities entered the soft space with the

aim of preventing the state from introducing additional restrictions on the municipal planning. The municipalities had noticed how the Ministry of the Environment had promoted Eastern Jutland as a metropolitan region and driver for the Danish economy alongside the Greater Copenhagen Area (Ministry of the Environment, 2006), and they believed therefore that the soft space should focus on how to develop an international competitive metropolitan region.⁵

The case of Eastern Jutland illustrates how the boundaries of former and contemporary formal planning arenas continue to shape the spatial politics of strategy-making in soft spaces, and how maintaining close links to formal arenas are crucial for building political legitimacy. Furthermore, the case illustrates how the agenda-setting in the soft space effectively was transformed from the state's ambition of introducing a spatial framework to municipal aspirations of developing an international competitive metropolitan region.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF SOFT SPACES FOR DANISH SPATIAL PLANNING

Recent processes of state re-territorialisation and rescaling in Denmark have resulted in an increasingly complex governance landscape in which the state's role in spatial planning generally has been weakening (except in the Greater Copenhagen Area), regional planning has become more diffused and development-oriented, and municipalities are increasingly collaborating on cross-municipal policy agendas at the regional scale in the auspices of the local government regional councils. These changes in the governance structures in Denmark reflect the liberal and conservative coalition government's aim of 'trimming' the public sector, leaving the majority of the planning related tasks to the local governance level.

The reduction of the Danish planning system from a three-tier to a two-tier system has been paralleled by new processes of filling in (Goodwin et al., 2005; Jones et al., 2005) at new subnational scales, in which new planning spaces are being imagined and experiments with new networked forms of governance initiated, reflecting what Haughton et al. (2010) refer to as soft spaces. The soft spaces were created by the Ministry of the Environment as an attempt to integrate transport planning and urban development planning at the scale of two emerging metropolitan regions. The Danish soft spaces were imagined as real-world scales for treated spatial issues such as congestion and urban sprawl and promoting neoliberal policy agendas of economic development and international competitiveness through creation of informal

platforms for policy integration and collaborative multi-level spatial strategy-making. In this sense, the soft spaces were intended to fill in a gap in the Danish planning system and provide the glue to bind formal scales of planning together.

The spatial strategy-making in the soft spaces held the prospect of win-win situations whereby the municipalities, by concentrating their future urban development around key nodes in the public transportation system, would create a greater population base and thereby economic incentives for future state investments in the public transportation system. The municipalities did not want to subscribe to a spatial framework and thereby restrict their future urban development without being sure of getting something in return. In this sense, the soft spaces demonstrate the co-existence of contested planning rationalities in Danish strategic spatial planning, characterised by a neoliberal development-oriented planning approach and a more traditional regulatory planning approach.⁶ Instead, the municipalities saw the soft spaces as convenient cross-municipal platforms for transport infrastructure lobbying and promotion of economic development and were to some extent able to subvert the agenda-setting towards these issues. This reflects, partly, the requirement of win-win situations in informal strategic spatial planning, and partly, the requirement of a flexible agenda-setting allowing multiple interpretations, creation of temporary spaces of consensus, and blurring of spatial politics.⁷

The soft space planning episodes remained largely the Ministry of the Environment's invention with only limited participation from the Ministry of Transport. The soft spaces remained therefore rather disappointing in terms of developing an integrated approach to urban development and transport planning. This might reflect the silo mentality between the two ministries, which was simply transferred into the soft spaces. However, it also reflects that some decisions such as future investments in transport infrastructure naturally are taken in formal arenas of political decision-making, and that soft spaces in these cases at best might work as lobby platforms, as the Danish soft spaces demonstrate. This suggests, as Greenwood & Newman (2010) argue, that the soft space literature tends to underestimate the influence of traditional governmental structures, especially when it comes to decisions on large infrastructure projects.

In this regard, the soft spaces in Denmark seem to have limited influence on formal planning arenas and planning practices. Instead, the soft spaces were most significant in terms of fostering dialogue and cooperation across municipal boundaries. This seems in particular to be the case when synergies were created with the local government regional councils, as in Region Zealand. If soft spaces set out to challenge

formal scales and promote different spatial logics or overcome political geographies established through time, they are more likely to be contested and thus unable to fulfil their purposes, as demonstrated in the Eastern Jutland soft space. Haughton & Allmendinger (2009a) reached a similar conclusion in their study of the Thames Gateway, highlighting how coincidence between functional and institutional areas is important for focusing resources and building consensus. This suggests that the role of soft spaces in strategic spatial planning might be rather limited, as the scale of soft spaces somehow has to be defined with administrative boundaries in mind.

On the other hand, it is important to understand soft spaces as socio-political constructs, created to empower certain issues and interests. In the UK, the soft spaces emerged, partly, as a consequence of New Labour's state project of spatial planning, and partly, as a consequence of increasing frustrations with the formal requirements of statutory planning, which were believed to hamper economic development. Here, soft spaces set out to question and indeed work around some of the wider planning responsibilities associated with traditional land use planning. In this way, soft spaces promote certain agendas and certain ways of thinking about strategic spatial planning, which reflect neoliberal political agendas.

Along the same lines, we can understand the emergence of soft spaces in Danish spatial planning and the agenda-setting in the soft spaces as an expression of the increasingly neoliberal political climate in Denmark, in which the traditional social welfarist perspective on strategic spatial planning increasingly are under pressure.⁸ Here, soft spaces are understood as important platforms for promoting a particular neoliberal version of strategic spatial planning concerned with economic development. It is in this context, we might understand soft spaces as vehicles for neoliberal transformation of strategic spatial planning.

CONCLUSIONS

The paper seeks to contribute to the recent debate in the planning literature on the emergence of soft spaces with fuzzy boundaries in spatial planning. Whilst the planning literature celebrates soft spaces as "some of the most innovative 'spatial planning' practices" (Haughton et al., 2010, p.2), this paper argues for a need to maintain a critical stance towards the emergence of soft spaces in spatial planning. The paper draws attention to how attempts to destabilise existing planning practices and cultures through the use of soft spaces potentially open up for neoliberal transformations of

strategic spatial planning. In neoliberal political climates, there is a risk that policy agendas promoted through soft spaces prioritise economic development at the expense of wider planning responsibilities related to environmental protection and social justice. The paper calls therefore for critical examination of how policy agendas are being shaped in soft spaces, and how these agendas seek to influence formal planning arenas.

In this paper, I have explored these issues in recent episodes of spatial strategy-making in new soft spaces at subnational scales in Denmark. I have illustrated how soft spaces, intended to integrate urban development and transport planning at the scale of new metropolitan regions, were turned into cross-municipal lobby platforms for investments in transport infrastructure. This suggests that the interpretive nature of agenda-setting in soft spaces makes them more suitable for promoting neoliberal development-oriented strategic spatial planning than more traditional forms of regulatory and distributive spatial planning. In this way, the empirical observation of the emergence of soft spaces in spatial planning is significant, as it draws attention to contemporary transformations of strategic spatial planning and their embeddedness with national spatial politics. In the case of Denmark, we see how strategy-making in soft spaces are used to unsettle the particular Danish approach to strategic spatial planning rooted in a rational comprehensive planning approach and a social-welfarist perspective, by calling for more flexible and solution-oriented forms of strategic spatial planning.

As noted in the critique of the soft space literature, it is important not to overstate the significance of soft spaces in spatial planning by disregarding the importance of formal scales of planning (Greenwood & Newman, 2010; Morphet, 2010). In this paper, I have sought to explore the links between soft spaces and formal planning arenas in order to develop a sense of how soft spaces are used to influence formal planning practices. In these regards, I find limited empirical evidence to support the claims made in the literature about the significance of soft spaces. However, if we understand soft spaces as the cutting edge of strategic spatial planning practices, and see strategy-making in soft spaces as a direction towards which formal planning practices might be moving, we might get a sense of the issues at stake in contemporary transformations of strategic spatial planning. Further research is needed to explore to what extent we might understand soft spaces as decisive arenas for changing planning practices and cultures.

NOTES

- 1 In this paper, I explore the third sub-research question: 'in soft spaces, how are policy agendas being shaped, and how does policy-making seek to influence formal planning arenas?' The analysis draws on a conceptual understanding of a soft space as a mix of new spatial imaginations and new forms of governance, and an analytical focus on agenda-setting in soft spaces, which are the two sub-themes in the paper, see table 1.1.
- 2 In chapter 8, I discussed how the spatial politics of strategy-making influence representations of space. Here, I add that spatial politics also influence the agenda-setting in soft spaces.
- 3 Whilst I in chapter 7 and 8 have treated the three sub-case studies as separate planning episodes, I break in this paper away from this structure and treat the planning episodes in the Greater Copenhagen Area and Region Zealand as a soft space in Danish spatial planning. This allows me to explore the connection between the two episodes and raise questions about how strategic spatial planning in this new soft space might be carried out in the future. The planning episode in Eastern Jutland is treated as a soft space on its own.
- 4 See chapter 5 and 6 for a detailed description of the organisational structure in the two planning episodes.
- 5 In chapter 7, I explored how these contested planning rationalities were manifested and handled in the planning episodes. Here, I argued that unresolved tensions between conflicting perceptions of the core idea of planning to a large extent explain the limited success of the planning episode in Eastern Jutland.
- 6 In chapter 7, I discussed how contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning in Denmark are shaped by the co-existence of contested planning rationalities and spatial logics.
- 7 In chapter 8, I discussed how fuzzy spatial representations might be offer temporary spaces of consensus as they allow multiple interpretations and blur the spatial politics of strategy-making. However, as potential tensions are not confronted, they are likely to resurface, reducing spatial strategies transformative force.
- 8 In chapter 7, I discussed how neoliberal winds of change recently have blow through the Ministry of the Environment. In this neoliberal political climate, strategic spatial planning has increasingly come under pressure. This is perhaps most noticeable in the 2010 national planning report (Ministry of the Environment, 2010e) and recent government proposals to dismantle part of the planning act (Danish Government, 2010).

FROM A CRISIS TO A REVIVAL OF STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING, AND BACK AGAIN...

This chapter synthesises the findings from the analysis into an overall discussion of the nature of the changes in strategic spatial planning in Denmark, and discusses to what extent the theorisations of strategic spatial planning in the literature are helpful for understanding contemporary transformations of strategic spatial planning in practice. The chapter answers the three sub-research questions in turn, and draws out perspectives and future challenges for strategic spatial planning in Denmark. The chapter ends with a critical discussion of contemporary theorisations of strategic spatial planning.

AT A POTENTIAL WATERSHED BETWEEN A REVIVAL AND A CRISIS OF STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING

In this PhD project, I have sought to develop an understanding of the nature of the changes in strategic spatial planning in Denmark, and to analyse how the changes in Danish strategic spatial planning correspond with theorisations of strategic spatial planning in the literature. I believe that such a research approach is helpful for stimulating critical reflections on how strategic spatial planning is evolving, and how we, as planning scholars, theorise about strategic spatial planning. The main research question for this PhD project has been:

Main research question: *How can we understand the nature of the changes in Danish strategic spatial planning in practice, how do the changes in practice correspond with the theorisations of strategic spatial planning in the literature, and how does this help us to reflect on both?*

The research into the nature of the changes in strategic spatial planning in Denmark has been carried out in a turbulent time. The 2006 national planning report marked a particular point in time where attempts were made to rethink strategic spatial

planning in Denmark and to re-imagine the map of Denmark. These changes took place in the context of changing governance structures, wider societal changes, and transformations in politics. New episodes of strategic spatial planning were envisioned at new planning scales, in new soft spaces, involving multi-level and cross-sectional collaborative attempts to prepare spatial frameworks and build governance capacities across an increasingly fragmented governance landscape. It was a period characterised by inclination to experiment with new forms of strategic spatial planning. However, it was also a period characterised by unsettledness, changing governance structures, and rescaling of planning powers. Whilst the structural reform in 2007 provided an opportunity to rethink strategic spatial planning in Denmark, it also resulted in a period where different levels of government were preoccupied with representing and negotiating their 'new' interests. The new episodes of strategic spatial planning became an important arena for representing and negotiating these interests, and in this sense, an important platform for dialogue across scales and policy sectors.

Whilst the importance of dialogue in this connection must not be downplayed, it did not result in the spatial frameworks intended, and perhaps most importantly the dialogue itself seemed to ebb away by the end of the planning episodes. The main explanation for this development is to be found in changes in the socio-political context. The *'New Map of Denmark'* and the *'Finger Plan 2007'* were prepared under one Minister of the Environment by a group of leading planners, who left the ministry after the structural reform. As a consequence, two of the planning episodes were implemented under a new management in the ministry and a new minister, who did not share the same perspectives on strategic spatial planning as the previous minister. These changes seemed to result in an increasingly neoliberal political climate within the ministry in which strategic spatial planning as an activity and entity were being questioned. I will return to my 'diagnosis' of contemporary strategic spatial planning in Denmark later in this chapter, when I draw out perspectives and future challenges for Danish strategic spatial planning. Here, it is sufficient to note that a crisis of strategic spatial planning seemed to be under way in Denmark by the end of the 2000s. In retrospect, this case study of strategic spatial planning in Denmark seems to have been carried out at a potential watershed between a revival and crisis of strategic spatial planning.

So far only a few observations of an emerging crisis of strategic spatial planning in Europe have been made in the planning literature. Cerreta et al. (2010) note how strategic spatial planning was experiencing difficulties by the mid-2000s, as questions were being asked about its efficacy. Van den Broeck (2008) has illustrated how the

socio-political position of strategic spatial planning in Flanders has taken a neoliberal turn since the beginning of the 2000s. Murray & Neill (2011) have questioned to what extent the German spatial logic of balanced development is turned into a neoliberal policy cover in harsh economic times. Along the same lines, it is increasingly being noticed how strategic spatial planning seems to provide a smokescreen for neoliberal transformations of spatial planning (Cerreta et al., 2010, Haughton et al., 2010). One of the main conclusions of the PhD thesis is that the Danish case of strategic spatial planning seems to confirm these initial observations. I will return to this issue later in this chapter.

In the remaining of this chapter, I will discuss the three themes running through this PhD thesis and in turn answer the three sub-research questions. Then, I will synthesise the findings in a discussion of to what extent the new strategic spatial planning provides a smokescreen for neoliberal transformations of strategic spatial planning. Furthermore, I will draw out perspectives and future challenges for strategic spatial planning in Denmark, and end the chapter by a critical discussion of contemporary theorisations of strategic spatial planning in the literature, and discuss future challenges for planning theory.

TRANSFORMING THE CORE IDEA OF PLANNING

Since the beginning of the 1990s, planning scholars and planning communities have actively sought to transform the core idea of planning under the label of 'a revival of strategic spatial planning'. The aim was to detach spatial planning from its regulatory associations by promoting a new strategic spatial planning as a vehicle for fostering economic development. The transformations of spatial planning focused both on the substance and procedure of planning, promoting a new set of planning rationalities and spatial logics. In chapter 7, I explored how contested transformations of the core idea of planning were being manifested and handled in contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning. I was interested in how continuities and transitions in thinking about strategic spatial planning shape the planning episodes. Furthermore, I was interested in how changes in the socio-political context influence episodes of strategic spatial planning, and to what extent the state project of strategic spatial planning was being transformed under neoliberal influence.

The case of strategic spatial planning in Denmark demonstrates how the core idea of planning is being transformed towards a more growth-oriented planning

approach, as a consequence of an emerging neoliberal political agenda emphasising a new spatial logic of growth centres in the major cities and urban regions. However, at the same time the new strategic spatial planning with its associated spatial logics is continuously challenged by a persistent regulatory, topdown rationality rooted in spatial Keynesianism. The recent turn towards more informal and collaborative forms of spatial policy-making in Denmark seems to be characterised by a particular Danish approach to strategic spatial planning, which not only rests in a more rational comprehensive planning tradition, but also in certain spatial logics which again and again seem to influence how practitioners think about strategic spatial planning. The 'Finger Plan' for the Greater Copenhagen Area and its associated spatial logics are so embedded in Danish planning culture that they continue to set a precedent for contemporary strategic spatial planning episodes. As a consequence, the abstract task of spatial policy-making is often translated into the more well-known spatial logics and vocabulary of regulatory land use planning.

The three planning episodes illustrate how this particular Danish approach to strategic spatial planning increasingly has come under pressure in the reinforced neoliberal political climate. As a consequence, the normative state spatial project of strategic spatial planning, resurfacing in the beginning of the 2000s and culminating with the 2006 national planning report, did not manifest itself in the planning episodes as intended. By 2010, the momentum for rethinking strategic spatial planning in Denmark seemed to be lost.

RE-IMAGINING SPACE

The ideas of relational geography have played an important role in the transformations of strategic spatial planning. The new theorisations of strategic spatial planning break with the Euclidean and absolute view of space, which traditionally have underpinned cartographic maps and spatial representations in strategic spatial planning. Instead, the new strategic spatial planning promotes a relational understanding of spatiality as a more appropriate way of understanding the multiple spaces of flows that make up contemporary urban areas. In addition, relational conceptions of spatiality, including fuzzy representations, are said to play an important role in building consensus for spatial strategies. In chapter 8, I analysed how space was being re-imagined in the interplay between the spatial politics of new governance landscapes and innovations in the use of spatial representations in contemporary episodes of strategic spatial

planning. I was interested in which interpretations of spatiality underpinned spatial representations in Danish strategic spatial planning. Furthermore, I was interested in how the spatial politics of strategy-making influence representations of space, and to what extent fuzzy spatial representations can be understood as products of such politics.

The case of strategic spatial planning in Denmark indicates how new relational conceptions of space and place are travelling into planning practice. The changing governance structures emerging from the structural reform provided a welcomed opportunity to re-imagine the map of Denmark. Whilst the two urban regions articulated on the *'New Map of Denmark'*, perhaps more than anything, signal transformations in the core idea of planning and changing forms of governance, they also illustrate an emerging awareness of the fluidity of space and a need for spatial re-imaginings. However, rather than replacing existing spatial conceptions and logics, new spatial imaginations were simply added to a discursive melting pot from which planning practitioners select appropriate spatial meanings. This selection and sense of appropriateness of certain spatial conceptions and logics seem to rest in a particular Danish planning culture rather than in certain conceptions of spatiality. As stressed above, the episodes of strategic spatial planning reveal a particular Danish approach to strategic spatial planning based around a few key spatial logics. Planners often returned to well-known spatial logics when trying to make sense of the urban dynamics and spatial structures of new planning spaces. These spatial logics remain rooted in Euclidean geography and a long held belief in planning's ability to control space.

When planners made use of fuzzy spatial representations and relational spatial concepts, these represented important initiatives to distance the planning episodes from the regulatory associations and contested distributive characteristics of statutory planning. The fuzzy spatial representations offered convenient temporary spaces of consensus by blurring the spatial politics of spatial strategy-making. This suggests that relationality might be used as a medium for depoliticisation in episodes of strategic spatial planning.

CHANGING SCALES AND FORMS OF GOVERNANCE

The transformations of strategic spatial planning should also be understood in the context of wider societal changes and processes of spatial restructuring, state re-

territorialisation, and rescaling. As part of these processes, new soft spaces are emerging in-between formal scales of planning. In the planning literature, the new soft spaces have been conceptualised as filling in the gaps between formal planning structures and processes, providing the glue that binds formal scales of planning together. In chapter 9, I suggested that we might understand the two urban regions on the *'New Map of Denmark'* as two new soft spaces in Danish spatial planning. In these new soft spaces, I analysed how policy agendas were being shaped, and how these agendas sought to influence formal planning arenas.

The recent processes of state re-territorialisation and rescaling in Denmark have resulting in increasingly complex and fragmented governance landscapes, in which the formal planning hierarchy is partly replaced by various planning scales and soft spaces which relationships continually are being negotiated. In this new customised multi-scalar spatial configuration no single tier can be said to hold decisive planning powers. In general, the state appears weakened in terms of spatial planning, with the exception of the Greater Copenhagen Area where the state has maintained significant planning powers. As a consequence, the state has to embark on informal, multi-level processes of spatial strategy-making in order to maintain its influence on contemporary planning practices. In this sense, we can understand the new soft spaces emerging in Danish spatial planning as processes of filling in. The new soft spaces in Danish spatial planning were created by the Ministry of the Environment as an attempt to integrate transport planning and urban development planning at the scale of two emerging urban regions. Whilst the soft spaces were imagined by the ministry as real-world scales for treating spatial issues such as congestion and urban sprawl, the municipalities saw the soft spaces as convenient platforms for cross-municipal transport infrastructure lobbying. The state was not able to guarantee new investments in transport infrastructure as such decisions had to be taken at formal planning arenas. It was therefore impossible to make trade-offs between the state and the municipalities, and as a consequence the planning episodes remained unsuccessful in terms of integrating urban development and transport planning.

Instead, the soft spaces were more significant in terms of fostering dialogue and cooperation across municipal boundaries. This seems in particular to be the case when synergies were created with the local government regional councils, as in Region Zealand. However, when soft spaces set out to challenge formal scales and promote different spatial logics or overcome political geographies established through time, they are more likely to be contested and thus unable to fulfil their purposes, as demonstrated in the Eastern Jutland soft space. In general, the case study of

soft spaces in Denmark demonstrates how soft spaces seem more appropriate for promoting policy agendas related to economic development. If we understand soft spaces as the cutting edge of strategic spatial planning practices, there is a risk that soft spaces are used as vehicles for promoting neoliberal transformations of strategic spatial planning.

THE NEW STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING AS A SMOKESCREEN FOR NEOLIBERAL TRANSFORMATIONS OF SPATIAL PLANNING

In this PhD thesis, I have told the story about how the opportunity to reinvent strategic spatial planning in Denmark at a time of changing governance structures was lost. It is a story about how momentum for new experiments with strategic spatial planning gradually faded away. The case of strategic spatial planning in Denmark illustrates how new strategic spatial planning ideas are meeting various forms of resistance in planning practice. The new strategic spatial planning ideas set out to destabilise and challenge an institutionalised set of practices and cultures. As things turned out in practice, new planning rationalities, spatial logics, conceptions of space and place, planning scales, and forms of governance were added to the planner's toolkit rather than replacing old ways of doing planning. The new strategic spatial planning ideas were adjusted to fit the particular Danish planning culture.

Contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning are characterised by the co-existence of new and old ways of thinking about strategic spatial planning. The tensions between contested planning rationalities and spatial logics have so far not materialised in the new coherent approach to strategic spatial planning envisioned in the 2006 national planning report. Instead, the state spatial project of strategic spatial planning came under pressure in the increasingly neoliberal political climate in which the political interest in strategic spatial planning seemed weakened. Whilst the planning community around the 2006 national planning report saw the structural reform as an opportunity to rethink the map of Denmark and experiment with new informal and collaborative forms of strategic spatial planning, the post-reform planning agency was struggling to implement these ideas in practice. The ministry planners involved in the planning episodes had to navigate initial municipal scepticism and ambiguous political support, whilst still being expected to deliver some kind of spatial strategy-making. In this context, the new strategic spatial planning ideas were helpful for navigating the complexity of strategy-making in different ways.

First, relationality became an important medium for depoliticisation. Planners made use of fuzzy spatial representations and relational spatial concepts to distance the planning episodes from the regulatory associations and contested distributive characteristics of traditional Danish strategic spatial planning. Fuzzy spatial representations were helpful for blurring the spatial politics of strategy-making and for keeping the planning episodes 'alive'. By removing the spatial politics from the exercise of preparing spatial frameworks, it was hoped that better (more objective) planning solutions could be found. Instead, the depoliticisation of spatial strategy-making seemed to provide a platform for a new set of neoliberal spatial politics underpinned by the rationale that political sensitive issues (e.g. distribution of future urban development) should not be discussed.

Second, the agenda-setting in the informal planning episodes became an important vehicle for promoting a neoliberal form of strategic spatial planning. The municipalities were allowed to mobilise around their common interests of lobbying for investments in transport infrastructure in order to build municipal political legitimacy for the planning episodes. There was an increased expectation of trade-offs being built through the processes in which subscribing to a spatial framework would automatically result in investments in transport infrastructure. These expectations fitted poorly into the formal structures of decision-making. As a consequence, the planning episodes turned into being little more than platforms for transport infrastructure lobbying. In this way, soft spaces and particularly the agenda-setting in soft spaces seem to put an increasing pressure on statutory planning to somehow incorporate trade-offs made in soft spaces in the formal planning apparatus. In this sense, soft spaces seem to be particular useful platforms for promoting issues related to economic development, when these clash with wider planning responsibilities of statutory planning. In these cases, soft spaces might act as vehicles for neoliberal transformation of strategic spatial planning.

This suggests that there indeed is a 'dark side' of strategic spatial planning,^{1½} in which new theorisations and practices of strategic spatial planning are (mis)used or showcased to fulfil certain purposes in planning practice. The case study of strategic spatial planning in Denmark demonstrates how the new strategic spatial planning ideas might be used as a smokescreen for neoliberal transformations of strategic spatial planning. At stake in these processes is a particular Danish approach to strategic spatial planning which is rooted in a rational comprehensive planning approach and a social-welfarist planning tradition.

FUTURE CHALLENGES FOR STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING IN DENMARK

In the beginning of the 1990s, attempts were made to make strategic spatial planning more interesting and relevant for politics. In Denmark national planning reports were turned into policy documents and linked to parliamentary elections. After a couple of decades of politicised strategic spatial planning, the trend seems to have reversed. The 2010 national planning report share many similarities with the national planning reports produced in Denmark in the 1980s. Danish strategic spatial planning is increasingly being depoliticised, stripped of political content and bold policy statements, and reduced to a matter of fulfilling formal planning requirements. The belief in strategic spatial planning's ability to facilitate economic development is lost. Strategic spatial planning is at the threshold of an emerging crisis.

Strategic spatial planning has always had better conditions in periods of economic upturn. This was the case in the 1960s and the 1990s. In this perspective, it is perhaps not surprising that strategic spatial planning currently is experiencing a downturn. Furthermore, as strategic spatial planning tends to be associated with centre-left governments (Albrechts et al., 2003), it can only be expected that strategic spatial planning ideas are 'translated' or 'reworked', if not abolished in more neoliberal political climates. In this perspective, it is perhaps surprising that strategic spatial planning was allowed to survive as long as it did in Denmark, and that rather topdown regulatory mechanisms such as a national planning directive for the Greater Copenhagen Area could be implemented. To me this bears witness to a strong tradition for and belief in strategic spatial planning in Denmark.

What will the future bring in terms of strategic spatial planning in Denmark? Well, according to my arguments above, the future of strategic spatial planning seems to depend on the outcome of the parliament election in the autumn of 2011 and the possibility of a subsequent economic upturn. If you look at some of the recent initiatives from the Ministry of the Environment, the forecast for strategic spatial planning in Denmark looks gloomy. For much of 2010, the Danish media was preoccupied with debating the tough preconditions for economic development in the more peripheral areas of Denmark, as a consequence of the global credit crunch. It was feared that Denmark would 'break in the middle' if something was not done. Indirectly, the discourses of an emerging A and B society led to increased political contestation of the spatial logics in the '*New Map of Denmark*', in which everything beyond the two metropolitan regions was suddenly reframed as 'peripheral Denmark'. Spill-over

effects from economic development in metropolitan areas were no longer perceived as the adequate formula for kick-starting the Danish economy. On the contrary to what might have expected, the discussions on peripheral Denmark sparked little debate on spatial and social inequality on the national scale. Instead, the government proposed changes to the planning act which sought to reduce planning regulations in peripheral areas to accommodate and facilitate new economic development (Danish Government, 2010), in effect adjusting planning regulations for a third of the country. This supports the picture of how the current political perspective on strategic spatial planning once again has tipped towards the perception of planning as restricting urban and economic development.

The forthcoming revision of the '*Finger Plan 2007*' seems to support a similar analysis. In the discussion paper on the '*Finger Plan 2012*' (Ministry of the Environment, 2011), the Ministry of the Environment proposes what can be interpreted as a theme revision of the '*Finger Plan*'. In the revision of the '*Finger Plan*', the ministry seems to be concerned with a few issues that particularly have the minister's interest such as climate adaption, e.g. how can the green wedges be used to accumulate rainwater from the increasingly heavy rain showers – an issue that has become even more predominant as heavy rain showers have flooded large parts of Copenhagen in the summer 2011. In the background remain (so far) issues that planners with a strong interest in strategic spatial planning perhaps see as equally important, such as the Greater Copenhagen Area's relationship to the surrounding areas of Zealand and the Øresund Region.

Denmark is facing a number of important challenges when it comes to the future role of strategic spatial planning. As in the 1980s, strategic spatial planning is struggling to maintain momentum in tough economic times. The current state of strategic spatial planning seems ill-equipped to manage future periods of (expected) rapid urbanisation. Rather than taking a proactive approach, Danish strategic spatial planning is expected to remain reactive, awaiting the Ministry of Transport's strategic analyses by 2013, indicating the needs for future investments in transport infrastructure. These reports might once again spark a renewed interest in integrating transport planning and urban development. Whether such a moment sparks new experiments with strategic spatial planning depends on the political climate at the time. Until then strategic spatial planning in Denmark is likely to remain in standby mode.

FUTURE CHALLENGES FOR PLANNING THEORY

I suggested earlier that there might be a 'dark side' of strategic spatial planning, in which the new strategic spatial planning ideas are (mis)used as smokescreens for neoliberal transformations of strategic spatial planning. This aspect of strategic spatial planning has so far not been theorised in the planning literature. In chapter 2, I discussed how contemporary theorisations of strategic spatial planning recently have been criticised for being unhelpful for understanding how strategic spatial planning is carried out in practice (Newman, 2008). The findings in the case study of strategic spatial planning in Denmark support to some extent this claim.

Contemporary theorisations of strategic spatial planning seem to be adequate for understanding how strategic spatial planning is being transformed as a consequence of wider societal changes. The theories are helpful for researching and understanding how the core idea of planning is being transformed, how space is being re-imagined, and how new scales of new forms of governance are being promoted on a general level. However, the theorisations do not capture the dynamics within contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning, and how these are being shaped by the specific socio-political contexts within which they are embedded. At the moment, there is only limited research which conceptualises how strategic spatial planning ideas might be appropriated by neoliberal political agendas, or which explores an emerging crisis of strategic spatial planning. This suggests that there is a gap between the theories and practices of strategic spatial planning.

In order to narrow the gap between planning theory and practice planning, I have developed a critical perspective on strategic spatial planning, which takes empirical research of how strategic spatial planning is carried out in practice as a departure point for critical discussion of contemporary theorisations of strategic spatial planning. I have developed a conceptual framework which tries to capture how strategic spatial planning in theory and practice is being transformed under influence from wider societal changes and socio-political contexts. I believe that this framework is helpful for developing an understanding of and for critiquing contemporary transformations of strategic spatial planning in practice.

At the moment, there are only a few attempts in the planning literature to develop critical perspectives on strategic spatial planning and to critique how strategic spatial planning is carried out in practice. Without such a critique of planning practice, and without the theoretical and empirical foundation on which such critique can build, powerful actors and policy agendas might shape and transform planning practices

unchallenged. In an environment without a strong theoretical critical mass, sufficient theoretical insight, and empirical research to draw on, critiques of strategic spatial planning practices might have limited resonance in planning practice. There is therefore a need for future research agendas that seek to explore how strategic spatial planning is carried out in practice and conceptualise how to make sense of these practices. I believe that this is an appropriate and important role for planning theory and planning research in the future, and at least one way for planning scholars to influence and hopefully improve planning practices.

In this PhD project, I have made a small contribution to this task. I have developed the first steps towards a critical perspective on strategic spatial planning, and I have outlined a conceptual framework for making sense of how strategic spatial planning is being transformed in planning theory and practice, which future research and theorisations might draw on. Furthermore, I have used this critical perspective and the conceptual framework to research how strategic spatial planning in Denmark is being transformed under neoliberal influence. I hope that this PhD thesis will stimulate critical reflections on the future of strategic spatial planning among planners and policy-makers in Denmark and beyond, and inspire academics to bring the research agendas into strategic spatial planning forward.

NOTES

- 1 This term is borrowed from Flyvbjerg & Richardson (2002), who argue that communicative planning theories are problematic, because they are only concerned with prescribing how planning should be done, and not how planning is carried out in practice. This hampers an understanding of how power shaped planning practice, which is referred to as the 'dark side of planning'.

APPENDIX

LIST OF INTERVIEWS

1. Axel Thrige Laursen (**ATL**), ministry planner at the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning, interview conducted the 2nd November 2009.
2. Anja Valhøj (**AV**), development consultant at Vordingborg Municipality, interview conducted the 21st April 2010.
3. Benedict Moos (**BM**), chief consultant/project manager at Slagelse Municipality, interview conducted the 19th April 2010.
4. Britt Vorgod Pedersen (**BVP**), head of planning in Gladsaxe Municipality, interview conducted the 22nd April 2010.
5. Carl Nielsen (**CN**), technical director at Aarhus Municipality, interview conducted the 4th August 2010.
6. Esben Haarder Paludan (**EHP**), head of planning at Roskilde Municipality, interview conducted the 20th April 2010.
7. Hans Brigsted (**HB**), head of planning at Hillerød Municipality, interview conducted the 7th May 2010.
8. Henrik S. Bernberg (**HSB**), planner at Randers Municipality, interview conducted the 11th August 2010.
9. Hans-Jørgen Bøgesø (**HJB**), former technical director at Kolding Municipality, interview conducted the 10th August 2010.
10. Jan Jørgensen (**JJ**), transport planner at the Danish Transport Authority, interview conducted the 6th May 2010.
11. Jens Pouplier (**JP**), planner at the Agency of Environmental and Spatial Planning, national environment centre Aarhus, interview conducted the 18th November 2009.
12. Karin Ege (**KE**), deputy head of planning in Gladsaxe Municipality, interview conducted the 22nd April 2010.
13. Marianne Bendixen (**MB**), project manager for the City Circle Project, interview conducted the 22nd April 2010.
14. Maj Green (**MG**), vice director in Gladsaxe Municipality, interview conducted the 22nd April 2010.

15. Niels Aalund (**NA**), municipal director at Horsens Municipality, interview conducted the 5th August 2010.
16. Niels Østergaard (**NØ**), former head of planning in the Ministry of the Environment, interview conducted the 2nd November 2009.
17. Peder Baltzer Nielsen (**PBN**), former head of planning in the Ministry of the Environment, interview conducted the 4th November 2009.
18. Peter Hartoft-Nielsen (**PHN**), project manager for the '*Finger Plan 2007*' at the Agency of Spatial Planning and Environmental Planning, interview conducted the 3rd November 2009.
19. Rene Lønnee (**RL**), head of regional development at Region Zealand, interview conducted the 6th May 2010.
20. Svend Erik Rolandsen (**SER**), project manager of Plan09, interview conducted the 3rd November 2009.
21. Tue Rex (**TR**), municipal planner at Copenhagen Municipality, interview conducted the 5th May 2010.
22. Vilhelm Michelsen (**VM**), former planner at the Agency of Environmental and Spatial Planning, national environment centre Aarhus, interview conducted the 18th November 2009.

INTERVIEW GUIDE TEMPLATE

Scale of strategy-making

1. Why is there a need to plan at the scale of Copenhagen/Zealand/Eastern Jutland?

Motives and driving forces

2. What is the aim of the project/planning process as you see it?
 - Why does your municipality participate in the dialogue project? (Zealand and Eastern Jutland only)
3. Has the aim(s) of the process been defined from the beginning?
 - Has there been consensus on what the process was about?
 - Has the end product been defined beforehand?
 - Has the focus been very spatial/physical or has it been broader?
 - How much has the process been about creating an overall structure and how much about creating policies?

Form of governance

4. How has the process been organised?
 - How are decisions made?
5. What roles have the different actors had in the process (especially the municipalities' perspective on the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Transport)?

Process output

6. What are the intentions behind the output(s) produced?
 - How useful is this strategy for your own planning?

Legitimacy

7. Was it difficult to reach agreement on the content of the strategy? (Zealand and Eastern Jutland only)
 - To what degree has it been possible to make unpopular decisions (e.g. distribution of growth)?
8. How do you secure legitimacy of the process?
 - To what degree has the tradition for regulation in the Greater Copenhagen Area played a role in the municipalities accept of the new 'Finger Plan'? (The Greater Copenhagen Area only)

Leverage

9. How do you make sure that the core ideas in the strategy are transferred into municipal/regional/state planning?
 - How well does what you do in this process connect with the region's planning? (Eastern Jutland and Zealand)

10. Has it been useful to be part of the process? (Zealand and Eastern Jutland only)

Interpretation of spatiality

11. How has the map been produced?
 - What is the key message in the map?
 - Has the map been subject of discussion?

Changing planning practice?

12. Has this planning process been different from traditional planning processes?
 - Do you think the planning approach applied will become more dominant in the future?
13. Do you see planning practice changing these years?
14. Do you have any reflections on whether a 'Finger Plan' or a dialogue project is more useful?
15. Has the recent changes in the Ministry of the Environment had an impact on the process?

Future interviews

16. Have you any suggestions on who I should speak to about my research?

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